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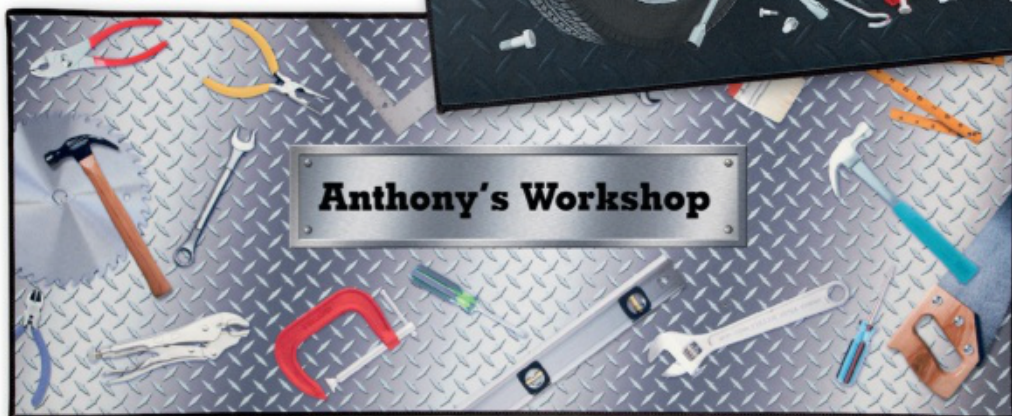


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MURDER MOST FOWL

By Matthew Bernstein

Cockfighting was violent enough—then came the shooting of a spectator

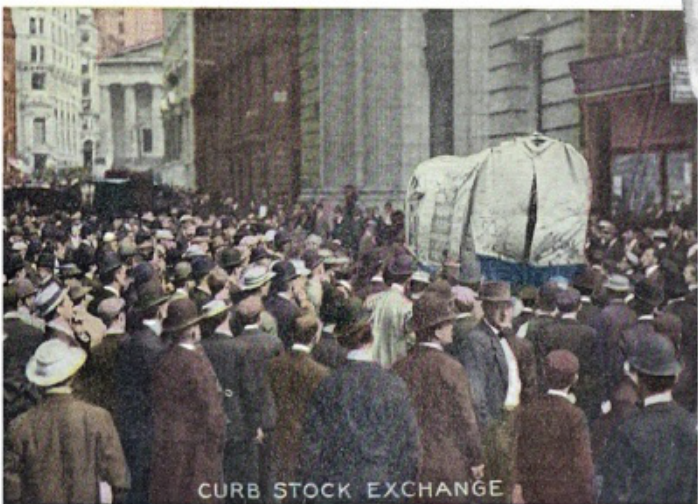


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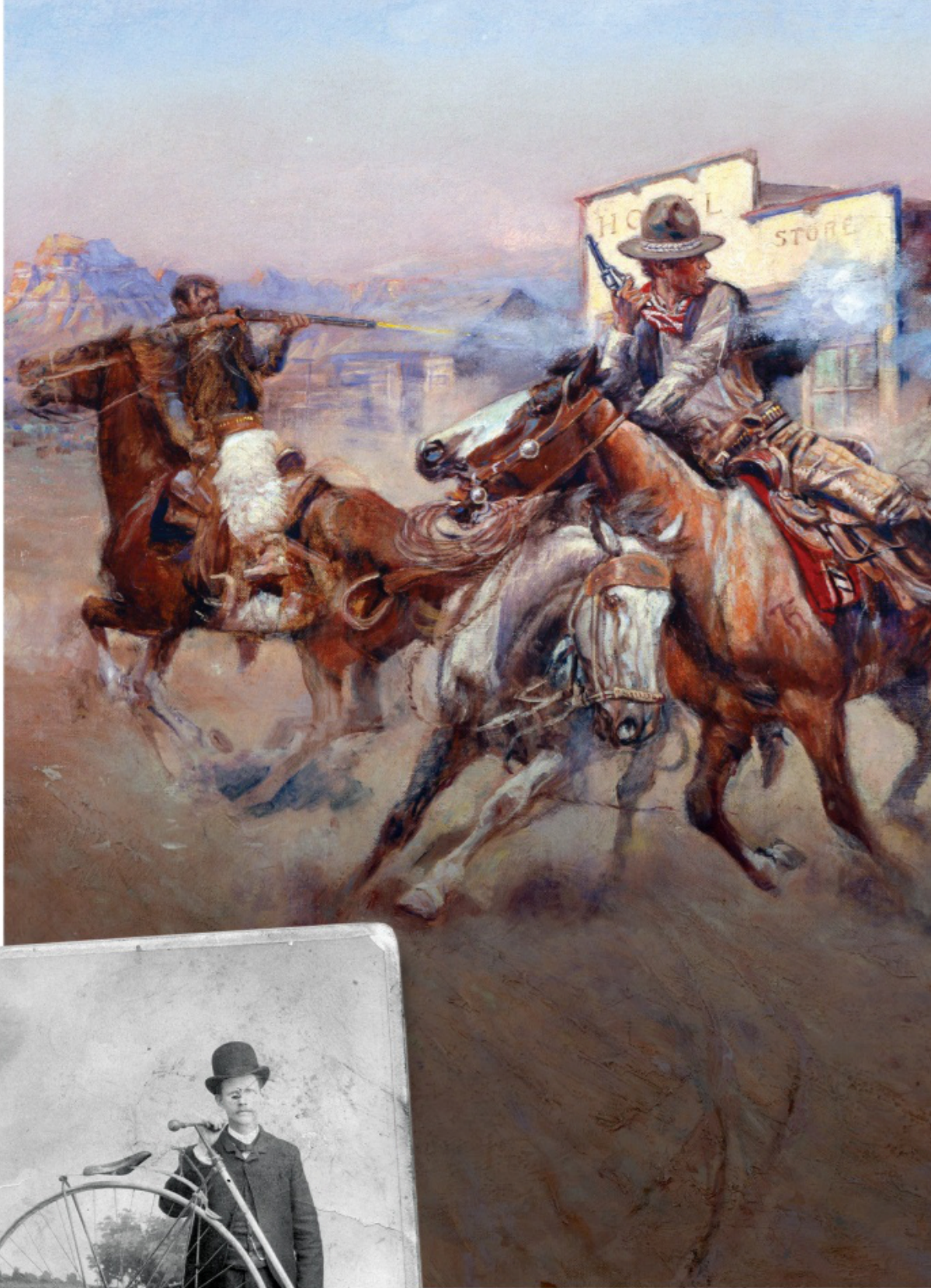
DEADLY HORSEPLAY IN THE DAKOTAS

By Aaron Woodard

Outlaws profited from purloined ponies but faced harsh extralegal punishment



CURB STOCK EXCHANGE



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Prospectors followed the Pony Express to gold-rich Cherry Creek, Nevada

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California's Mount Whitney and the Alabama Hills co-star in many films

ON THE COVER

Some notorious Old West towns could be mighty dangerous places to hang your hat by day and especially after dark, as depicted in Andy Thomas' *Night Shot*. (© *Night Shot* by Andy Thomas)

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WESTERN TOWNS TOO TOUGH TO FORGET

What was the wildest, wickedest, toughest, meanest, baddest, deadliest, gunfightingest town on the Western frontier? While an intriguing question, there's no easy answer, and any answer one gives is likely to be regarded as "all wrong." Many 19th-century communities—some nearly forgotten today—are in the running. Even naming a Top 10 of such notorious locales would leave out "worthy" candidates. One thing is certain, though: Ask people that question in 2020, and 99.9 percent of the time their answer will be Deadwood (Dakota Territory), Tombstone (Arizona Territory) or Dodge City (Kansas). That figures, as those three touristy towns are by far the ones most associated with the Wild West era (not counting such metropolises as San Francisco and Denver, which could get plenty wicked and mean in their own right).

In our August cover story *Wild West* contributor Rod Soodalter looks beyond the Big Three to provide a compendium of other unsettling settlements. He shot for a list of 10 but ended up with 13, as he couldn't decide which of four towns—Bannack, Virginia City, Hell Gate or Helena—rated as Montana Territory's worst hellhole. His other tough towns (in no particular order) are Ogallala, Neb.; Tascosa, Texas; Pioche, Nev.; Bodie, Calif.; Fort Griffin, Texas; Cromwell, Okla.; Las Vegas, New Mexico Territory; Newton, Kan.; and Lincoln, New Mexico Territory. As Soodalter notes, Ogallala earned the sobriquet "Gomorra of the Plains," Tascosa was dubbed the "Hardest Place on the Frontier," and in an 1881 diary an emigrant girl called Bodie the "wickedest town in the West." Various newspapers, of course, have applied similar labels to other wayward communities, including



The Montana ghost town of Bannack, today a state park, was beset in the 1860s by gold seekers (honest and otherwise) and extralegal lynchings (vigilantes even strung up the sheriff in 1864).

DODGE CITY, KNOWN AS THE 'WICKEDEST LITTLE CITY IN AMERICA'

ers); Ruby, Ariz. (Mexican bandits); and Canyon Diablo, Arizona Territory (gamblers, outlaws, dead lawmen, a main thoroughfare named "Hell Street").

In Kansas the moniker "Wickedest Cow Town" was as widespread as Texas Longhorns. Most infamous among them was Dodge City, known as the "Wickedest Little City in America" (and more respectfully as "Queen of the Cow Towns"). But at various times Newton, Abilene, Ellsworth, Wichita and Hays City were considered no less wicked. Some historians and criminologists contend these cattle towns were not nearly as dangerous as portrayed in popular culture and, indeed, rattle off numbers to prove they were less violent than many present-day American cities. Still other experts insist homicide rates in cattle towns and elsewhere across the West were extraordinarily high by today's standards. The debate continues.

No doubt, though, Kansas towns—with help from visiting Texans, of course—were plenty rowdy when the cattle herds arrived. In the late 19th century they were likely outdone in rowdiness and criminal behavior (at least per capita) by Gate City and Neutral City in the lawless land to the south. Those two badmen burghs were 5 miles apart in the Oklahoma Panhandle, known as "No-Man's-Land" after a *New York Sun* reporter described it as "God's Land, But No Man's." Not far away was a woebegone settlement named Old Sod Town, which longtime *Wild West* contributor Robert Barr Smith said was "probably the worst of No-Man's-Land's towns...a center for the moonshine trade...and center of operations for an outfit of horse thieves called the Chitwood Gang." So, why is Old Sod Town so little remembered? Smith supplies the principal reason: "It's gone now—today only the wind remains." The same goes for more than a few other Western settlements of the 1800s. Deadwood, Tombstone and Dodge City represent only the tip of the Stetson when it comes to tough towns of the Wild West. Others were not so tough that they couldn't die, yet they deserve to be remembered. **WW**

Jerome, Ariz. (gambling, prostitution, opium dens, gunfights, but no Wyatt Earp); Julesburg, Colo. (gambling, prostitution, killings, outlaw town founder Jules Beni); Taft, Mont. (pimps, prostitutes, murderers,

Wild West editor Gregory Lalire's next historical novel, *Man From Montana*, comes out in April 2021. His earlier novels include 2019's *Our Frontier Pastime: 1804–1815* and 2014's *Captured: From the Frontier Diary of Infant Danny Duly*. His short story "Halfway to Hell" appears in the 2018 anthology *The Trading Post and Other Frontier Stories*.



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Mian Situ takes hold of the Chinese immigrant experience in the West.

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China's Lost Women in the Far West

"As Chinese immigrants in California were generally regarded as inferior, it stood to reason that unfair and harsh treatment of Chinese women would not raise much concern with the general public," writes Lynne Yuan in an article published in the October 2019 *Wild West* and honored by Western Writers of America as a 2020 Spur finalist in the best Western short nonfiction category.

Extended Interview With Johnny D. Boggs

After 14 years as a sports reporter and editor in Texas, Boggs moved to Santa Fe and went on to win eight Spur Awards from Western Writers of America for his fiction, edit the WWA journal *Roundup* and become a special nonfiction contributor to *Wild West*. At the WWA's September 2020 convention in Rapid City, S.D., he'll receive that organization's prestigious Owen Wister Award for lifetime contributions to Western literature.

More About Mian Situ

Johnny Boggs writes about the Chinese-born California artist who has celebrated Chinese immigrants in the 19th-century West in such paintings as *The Golden Mountain, Arriving San Francisco, 1865*, which was the lead art for Lynne Yuan's well-received article "China's Lost Women in the Far West."

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CREE CREDENCE

I read with interest Jon Guttman's "Hunting Big Bear," in the February 2020 issue of *Wild West*. There are a few sentences in his article that refer to the motives of the Crees based on the history created by the Canadians (soldiers, survivors, politicians, etc.). I am the author of biographies of Wandering Spirit and Fine Day and the 2015 book *Defending Frog Lake: An Analysis of the Frog Lake Massacre, 2 April 1885*, which has new information that fills out the Cree side of the story.

The Crees had reason to believe they might be attacked (documented in my book). Even minutes before the actual massacre Wandering Spirit was in the act of moving everyone, Canadians and Crees, to a new location that could be better defended. Because Cree warriors would consider anyone outside the camp as an enemy, the Canadians had to be brought into the new camp for their own safety. The massacre occurred because the Indian agent, Thomas Quinn, would not cooperate; his refusal closed the door on any peaceful resolution. If Wandering Spirit hadn't killed him, someone else would have, and with his death there was no longer any point to sparing the other Canadians. The killing of Quinn meant war. History has also spread the false story that 40-year-old Wandering Spirit and other young men usurped power from Big Bear. Power is always transferred from the chief to the head warrior in times of danger. This legitimate transfer of power occurred at Frog Lake from Big Bear to Wandering Spirit, who had been the head warrior since the late 1870s and would probably have his finest hour in the May 28, 1885, Frenchman Butte fight [depicted above]. If the transfer had not been legitimate, no one would have followed Wandering Spirit. Also, the motivation history has given us—that the Crees were starving and desperate—is false. The Crees would not kill their neighbors for food. I've dealt with this and other false motives in my book, which several history buffs have told me has changed their view of what happened at Frog Lake.

Garry Radison
Calgary, Alberta
Canada

GUNS CHAMPION

I particularly enjoyed Kurt House's Guns of the West article "Guns of the Johnson County War," in the April 2020 issue. This episode in Wyoming history holds a special interest for me, as my father



knew one of the participants. Nate Champion's siege diary was found by Chicago reporter Samuel Clover. Some sources state Nate had trouble with literacy. I've wondered about the legitimacy of the diary. It seemed to be more good copy than last testament of a doomed rustler.

I was aware of the existence of "Wolcott's List," enumerating by serial number descriptions of weapons seized by authorities from the Invaders. Some years ago on an episode of *Pawn Stars* a man brought in an engraved Peacemaker, claiming it had been carried by an Invader. Rick Harrison declined the offer, as there was no supporting documentation. Too bad he was unaware of Wolcott's List.

Robert Rybolt
Randallstown, Md.

SIZE MATTERS

In your August 2019 Go West there is reference to the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve in Kansas. You list its size at nearly 11,000 square miles. In fact, it is nearly 11,000 *acres*. The preserve is well worth visiting, as it offers splendid views of the Flint Hills from its trails. It also has several dozen bison in a fenced area. The federal presence is a few acres around a gift shop and interpretive center; the Nature Conservancy runs the rest. A much larger conservancy property is the Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in northern Oklahoma, just below the Kansas line. It is nearly 40,000 acres, with about 2,600 bison and assorted other animals and birds, and celebrates its 30th anniversary in October.

Jenk Jones
Tulsa, Okla.

NICE BISON

I really enjoyed reading the article "Buffalo Savivors," by David McCormick, in the December 2019 issue. It reminded me of a photograph I took a while ago when a friend and I visited Jackson Hole, Wyo. We drove down a dirt road near Wilson, Wyo., and came upon a herd of buffalo roaming over an area that was not fenced. I leaned out the window of the car and snapped a photo of a buffalo just as it came over a small rise and paused with the Grand Tetons behind him. I think it makes a striking image.

Jake Fuller
Gainesville, Fla.



ROOSEVELT COVER

I purchased your excellent October 2019 issue. That Theodore Roosevelt cover sure catches the eye on the newsstands. I plan on framing this issue on the wall beside my Old West library. This will be the 11th *Wild West* cover on the wall.

Paul Gordon
St. Thomas, Ontario
Canada

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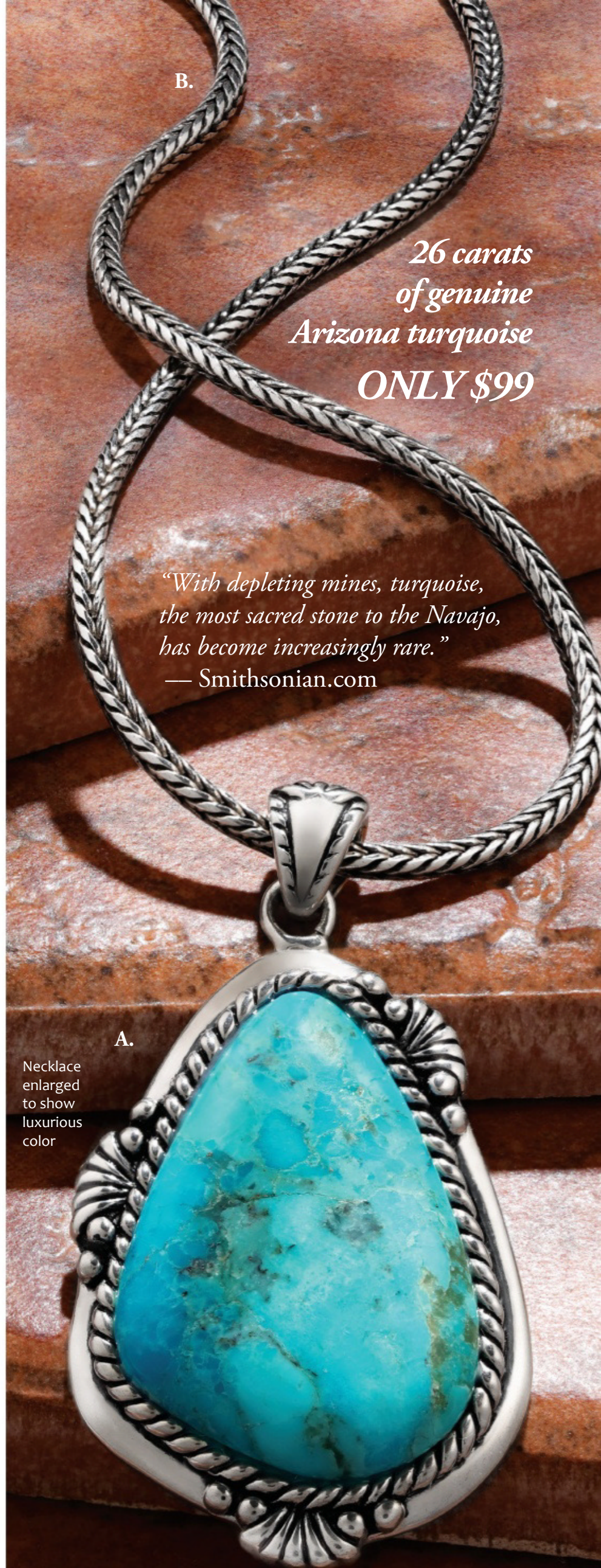
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10 REASONS WHY FORT WORTH IS A WESTERN TOWN—AND DALLAS ISN'T



Top: Texas Longhorns sometimes make the scene at Fort Worth's historic stockyards. Above: Butch Cassidy of Wild Bunch fame enjoyed downtime in Fort Worth in 1900, as did the Sundance Kid and several other members of the infamous outlaw gang.

1 Statues: Fort Worth has put up statues to cowboy humorist Will Rogers, bulldogging inventor Bill Pickett and Comanche Chief Quanah Parker. Dallas put up a statue to Robert E. Lee and has since taken it down.

2 Billy Bob's Texas: Billing itself as the world's largest honky-tonk, Billy Bob's opened in the Fort Worth Stockyards in 1981 and is still going strong after more than 9,000 performances, including 58 Willie Nelson concerts.

3 Tooth Doctors: Fort Worth dentists stick to dentistry—unlike Doc Holliday, the Georgia-born tubercular dentist turned gunslinger who once called Dallas home.

4 Butch and Sundance: Fort Worth once served as a hideout for the West's most photogenic outlaw gang, the Wild Bunch, who in 1900 had their portrait taken in John Swartz's studio at 705½ Main before riding into the sunset.

5 Superior Saloon: Fort Worth had the state's best saloon, the original White Elephant (1884–1913). Try to name one Dallas saloon!

6 Stock Value: Visitors to Fort Worth's historic stockyards can still see Longhorns, rodeo and real cowboys.

7 Nickname: Fort Worth has a fitting, down-to-earth one, "Cowtown." Dallas has the pretentious "Big D."

8 Sense of Direction: Fort Worth is "Where the West Begins," while Dallas is "Where the East Peters Out," in the immortal words of newspaper publisher Amon Carter (a Fort Worth resident, of course).

9 Centennial Commemoration: Fort Worth celebrated Texas' 100th anniversary in 1936 with the "Frontier Centennial," featuring Wild West shows and Sallie Rand's "Nude Ranch." Dallas put on an educational and cultural exhibition.

10 What's More: Fort Worth has cowboys and culture!

—Richard F. Selcer, a resident of one of these two cities



EARNING SPURS

Western Writers of America has honored Lynne Yuan as a Spur Award finalist in its short nonfiction category for “China’s Lost Women in the Far West,” which ran in the October 2019 *Wild West* (readable online at Wild-WestMag.com). Yuan, who grew up in Shanghai and greater New York City, is fluent in Mandarin and tapped Chinese-language sources for her article about

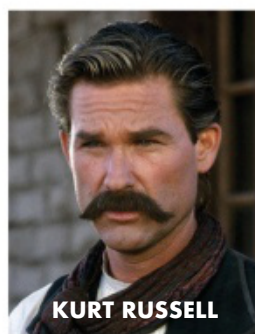
frontier-era Chinese women, who often worked as slaves or prostitutes and seldom got a square deal from either men or the law. “Thanks to [special contributor] John Koster and *Wild West* for giving me the opportunity to write,” says Yuan, a Seton Hall University undergraduate. “It was fun to blend Chinese and English narratives together to tell a story, and I really learned and grew a lot from the experience.”

The Spur winner in short nonfiction is “‘Worry, USA’: Dude Ranch Advertising Looks East, 1915–1945,” by Flannery Burke (*Montana: The Magazine of Western History*). Among other Spur winners are *Nighthawk Rising: A Biography of Accused Cattle Rustler Queen Ann Bassett of Brown’s Park*, by Diana Allen Kouris, in the biography category; *Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power*, by Pekka Hämäläinen, for historical nonfiction; and *A Forgotten Evil*, by Sheldon Russell, for historical novel. *Wild West* contributor Candy Moulton’s *The Mormon Handcart Migration: “Tounge nor Pen Can Never Tell the Sorrow”* was a finalist in historical nonfiction, while *Wild West* special contributor Johnny Boggs’ “Legend” (published in *Hobnail and Other Frontier Stories*, edited by Hazel Rumney) was a finalist in short fiction. For a complete list of Spur winners and finalists visit westernwriters.org. Honorees will be recognized at Western Writers of America’s forthcoming convention, Sept. 4–6, in Rapid City, S.D.

‘RUSSELLING’ UP THE HONORS

The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City has inducted actors Kurt Russell and father Bing Russell (1926–2003) into its Hall of Great Western Performers. Bing is best known for his roles as Deputy Sheriff Clem Foster on the TV series *Bonanza* and one of two Eastern stagecoach passengers in the 1960 classic *The Magnificent Seven*. He appeared in many other TV Westerns, including *Maverick*, *The Big Valley*, *Death Valley Days*, *The Virginian*, *Gunsmoke*, *The Guns of Will Sonnett*, *The Rifleman* and *Laramie*. Kurt Russell began acting on TV at age 12 and in 1963–64 played the title role in the ABC Western series *The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters*. He cemented his fame in the Western film world by starring as Wyatt Earp in 1993’s *Tombstone*. In 2015 he played the hangman in Quentin Tarantino’s *The Hateful Eight*.

Academy Award winner Robert Duvall, 89, has received the museum’s 2020 Lifetime Achievement Award for his 60-plus years working in the industry and promoting Western culture. Among Duvall’s Western highlights are the TV miniseries *Lonesome Dove* and *Broken Trail* and the films *True Grit*, *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid*, *Joe Kidd*, *Geronimo: An American Legend*, *Open Range* and *Wild Horses*. Others honored at the recent 60th annual Western Heritage Awards ceremony included Pekka Hämäläinen for best nonfiction book (*Lakota America: A New History of Indigenous Power*), Gerry Robinson for best Western novel (*The Cheyenne Story: An Interpretation of Courage*) and *Deadwood: The Movie* for best theatrical motion picture. For a complete list of winners visit nationalcowboymuseum.org.



KURT RUSSELL



BING RUSSELL



ROBERT DUVALL

WEST WORDS



‘Spending that many hours in the saddle gave a man plenty of time to think. That’s why so many cowboys fancied themselves philosophers’

—One of many quotes from the famed Charles Marion Russell (1864–1926), who worked as a cowboy for a number of Montana outfits before becoming a full-time artist, as well as an author and storyteller.

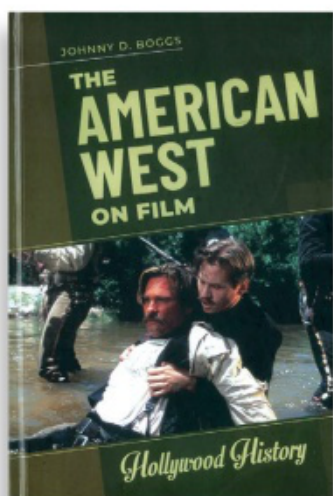
FAMOUS LAST WORDS

‘MY THROAT IS SORE AFTER TALKING SO MUCH TO SAVE MY LIFE’

—Sandy King, accused with “Russian Bill” Tattenbaum of rustling, said this after requesting a glass of water from vigilantes ready to stretch his neck in Shakespeare, New Mexico Territory, on Nov. 9, 1881. And, no, all that talking didn’t save his life. Both men hanged.

THE REEL WEST ▼

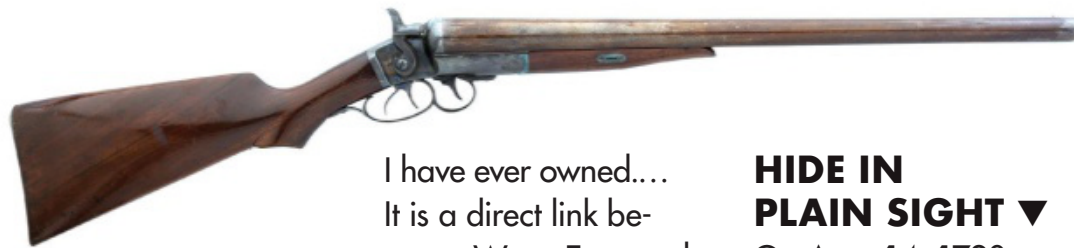
How accurate are Hollywood Westerns? *Wild West* special contributor Johnny D. Boggs addresses that question in his 2020 book *The American West on Film*, the latest in ABC-CLIO's *American History* series. "Movies rarely got the facts right in most genres," Boggs writes in the preface, "but movies aren't about history; ideally, they're about entertainment." Looking at 11 popular Westerns, the author compares each film's depiction of a post-Civil War event or figure with the real history (or at least what most historians believe it to be). In his chapter



on director George Cosmatos' 1993 Western *Tombstone* Boggs concludes, "Many historians agree that while *Tombstone* came closer than other movie in depicting the events surrounding the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, it was far from actual history." In another chapter he assesses director Arthur Penn's 1970 revisionist Western *Little*

Big Man, based on Thomas Berger's eponymous 1964 novel. "*Little Big Man* was woefully historically inaccurate, but that was never the point," Boggs writes. "Berger's novel tackled the myth of the frontier; Jack Crabb is an unrepentant liar. Penn's film version, while showing the wrongs inflicted on native Americans in the 19th century, also echoed social injustices and an ugly foreign war haunting 20th-century America."

The other nine Westerns under consideration are *Union Pacific* (1939), *The Ox-Bow Incident* (1943), *Red River* (1948), *High Noon* (1952), *The Searchers* (1956), *The Magnificent Seven* (1960), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), *Young Guns* (1988) and *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007). That last entry is no doubt the most accurate depiction of the real Jesse James (and the real Bob Ford, too). But as Boggs notes, "Viewers and critics were divided as to its entertainment value," and it didn't attract moviegoers the way the far less accurate *Jesse James* did back in 1939. Historians, filmmakers and Western movie buffs can agree on one thing: Boggs' book has entertainment value.



DOUBLE EARP ▲

The 10-gauge J. Stevens & Co. shotgun famed lawman Wyatt Earp used to dispatch Tombstone badman "Curly Bill" Brocius fetched a whopping \$375,000, almost quadruple its \$100,000 presale estimate, at the recent Americana & Political Signature Auction by Heritage [ha.com] in Dallas. According to Wells Fargo detective Fred Dodge, Earp shot Brocius with it at Iron Springs (present-day Mescal), Arizona Territory, on March 24, 1882, amid the lawman's "Vendetta Ride" against the outlaws known as the Cowboys. Dodge later wrote biographer Stuart Lake, author of *Wyatt Earp: Frontier Marshal*, about the shotgun, and their correspondence was included in the auction lot. When Dodge died in 1938, the shotgun passed to his son, Fred Dodge Jr. After changing hands three more times, dealer Greg Martin bought it in 1984. When Martin in turn sold it, he wrote to the buyer: "The Stevens double-barreled shotgun, Serial No. 927, you recently obtained from me represents one of the most important historical treasures

I have ever owned.... It is a direct link between Wyatt Earp and an era of American lore that is of incalculable importance."

CROW IMAGES ▼

The Montana Historical Society has digitized more than 1,000 scanned images from the Bud Lake and Randy



Brewer Crow Indian Photograph Collection, which the MHS acquired in 2015. Included are portraits of the well-known Chief Plenty Coups, Curly and White Men Runs Him and the young Crow's Child (photo above). These images are among more than 4,500 images from the historical society's archives available online via the Montana Memory Project [mtmemory.org/digital/collection/p267301coll3].



HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT ▼

On Aug. 14, 1720, one of the most significant battles of the early frontier West took place (near present-day Columbus, Neb.). The fight broke out during the summer expedition of 40 Spanish soldiers, 65 Pueblo allies and 12 Apache guides led by Lieutenant General Pedro de Villasur. Spain hoped to check New France's growing influence on the Great Plains. At dawn on the 14th, just south of the confluence of the Platte and Loup rivers, Pawnee and Otoe warriors (and perhaps a few French traders) attacked Villasur's camp, killing Villasur and 47 others. The survivors returned to Santa Fe, thus ending Spanish influence on the central Plains in the 18th century. An Indian artist documented Villasur's defeat in two vivid buffalo hide paintings (one pictured below). In 1758 Jesuit missionary Philipp Segesser acquired the hides, which the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe purchased in 1988.

SEE YOU LATER...



Diana Serra Cary

Diana Serra Cary, 101, a 1920s silent film child star known as “Baby Peggy” who in later life became a writer and biographer, died on Feb. 24, 2020, at home in Gustine, Calif. Born Peggy-Jean Montgomery in San Diego on Oct. 29, 1918, she was discovered by Hollywood at 19 months, and by 1924 the “Million-Dollar Baby” was earning \$1.5 million a year starring in such pictures as the 22-minute short *Peg o’ the Mounties* and the 64-minute feature *Captain January* (re-made in 1936 with the next big child star, Shirley Temple). Peggy’s father, Jack Montgomery, was a cowboy who became a stuntman and a double for Tom Mix. Diana (she changed her name in the late 1930s) wrote about him and other Hollywood cowboys in the article “From the Old Frontier to Film,” in the October 1994 *Wild West*. Cary wrote three more articles for the magazine. Her books include *The Hollywood Posse:*

The Story of a Gallant Band of Horsemen Who Made Movie History (1975), *Hollywood’s Children: An Inside Account of the Child Star Era* (1978) and *What Ever Happened to Baby Peggy: The Autobiography of Hollywood’s Pioneer Child Star* (1996). The documentary *Baby Peggy: The Elephant in the Room* debuted in 2012.



Charles Portis

Charles Portis, 86, the publicity-shy author of the 1968 novel *True Grit*—which served as the basis for two namesake Oscar-nominated movies (in 1969 and 2010) and inspired the sequel *Rooster Cogburn* (1975)—died on Feb. 17, 2020, in Little Rock, Ark. Born Dec. 28, 1933, in El Dorado, Ark., Portis served in the U.S. Marines during the Korean War. After studying journalism at the University of Arkansas, he rose to become London bureau chief of the *New York Herald Tribune* before turning to full-time fiction writing in 1964.



Bob Larson

Robert W. Larson, 92, a Denver native, longtime history professor at the University of Northern Colorado and the author of two well-received books about 19th-century Lakota leaders, died on May 18, 2020, in Greeley, Colo. Larson published *Red Cloud: Warrior-Statesman of the Lakota Sioux* in 1997. His article “Gall: ‘The Fighting Cock of the Sioux’” was the cover story of the June 2006 *Wild West*, and the next year he released *Gall: Lakota War Chief*. In 2013 he followed up with *Ernest L. Blumenschein: The Life of an American Artist*.



James Drury

James Drury, 85, title star of the popular 90-minute Western TV series *The Virginian*, which ran on NBC from 1962 to 1971, died on April 6, 2020, in Houston, Texas. Born in New

York City on April 18, 1934, he moved west to study drama at UCLA before landing TV and film stints. On the big screen he portrayed a less than noble gold prospector in the 1962 Sam Peckinpah Western *Ride the High Country*, starring Joel McCrea and Randolph Scott.



Bob McCubbin

Robert G. McCubbin, 83, a notable collector and founding president of the Wild West History Association (WWHA), died on April 9, 2020, in Santa Fe, N.M. Born Feb. 17, 1937, in Stillwater, Okla., Bob was known worldwide for his collection of historic Western photographs and first-edition books and pamphlets—most of which were auctioned off in January 2019. He generously shared his photos with book authors and such publications as *Wild West*. WWHA devoted its June *Journal* in tribute to McCubbin, whose memorial service is scheduled for Sept. 5, 2020 in Lincoln, N.M.



Stuart Whitman

Stuart Maxwell Whitman, 92, who played Marshal Jim Crown in the TV Western *Cimarron Strip* in 1967–68, died on March 16, 2020, in Montecito, Calif. Born on Feb. 1, 1928, in San Francisco, Whitman also co-starred in the Hollywood Westerns *The Comancheros* and *Rio Conchos*.



Glenna Goodacre

Sculptor Glenna Maxey Goodacre, 80, who designed the obverse of the Sacagawea dollar, as well as the Vietnam Women’s Memorial in Washington, D.C., died on April 13, 2020, in Santa Fe, N.M. Born in Lubbock, Texas, on Aug. 28, 1939, she suffered a brain hemorrhage in 2007 that forced her retirement in 2016. Goodacre was featured in Art of the West in the December 2019 *Wild West*.

EVENTS OF THE WEST

Note: Due to the coronavirus shutdown, some events may be canceled or delayed



Cowboy Gallery ▲

The renovated Cowboy Gallery at the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles celebrates the evolution of the cowboy from the open range era with new videos, infographics and hands-on stations. Call 323-667-2000 or visit theautry.org.

Palace View

The long-term exhibit "Palace Seen and Unseen," which relates the 400-year history of Santa Fe's Palace of the Governors, **opened April 19** at the New Mexico History Museum. The museum's Santa Fe campus includes the Palace of the Governors, the Fray Angélico Chávez History Library and the Pete V. Domenici Building. The exhibit examines the adobe building itself (designated a National Landmark in 1960)

and showcases related documents, photos, maps and excavated objects. Call 505-476-5200 or visit nmhistorymuseum.org.

WWA Convention

Western Writers of America has moved its 2020 convention to **Sept. 4–7** in Rapid City, S.D. Attendees can take advantage of writer/editor panels and likely will have the chance to visit such sights as the Adams House, the Days of '76 Museum and Mount Moriah Cemetery. Visit westernwriters.org.

WWHA Roundup ▼

The Wild West History Association (WWHA)



has canceled its 13th annual Roundup this summer in Fort Smith, Ark. Among other recent milestones in that historic town, officials dedicated the U.S. Marshals Museum on Riverfront Drive last fall, marking the 230th anniversary of the founding of the nation's oldest law enforcement agency. WWHA hopes to hold regional Roundups later this year. For more information visit wildwesthistory.org.

WHA Convention

The 60th annual Western History Association Conference will convene **Oct. 14–17** at the Hyatt Regency and the Albuquerque Convention Center in Albuquerque, N.M. Historians will be speaking on "Migrations, Meeting Grounds and Memory." Call 402-554-5999 or visit westernhistoryassociation.wildapricot.org.

Levi Strauss

The Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco presents

"Levi Strauss: A History of American Style" **through Aug. 9**. The exhibition features more than 150 items, including vintage apparel, advertising materials and ephemera related to the life and career of Levi Strauss and the birth of the blue jean. Call 415-655-7800 or visit thecjm.org.



Warhol's West ▲

The traveling exhibition "Warhol and the West" **opens July 1** at the Tacoma Art Museum in Washington. The exhibition explores Warhol's fascination with the American West and such celebrated figures as George Armstrong Custer (pictured) and Geronimo. Call 253-272-4258 or visit tacomaartmuseum.org.

Suffrage

This year marks the centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted American women the right

to vote. The exhibit "Blazing a Trail," at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City **Nov. 21, 2020–May 16, 2021**, explores why women in Western states realized suffrage years before the rest of the nation. Call 405-478-2250 or visit nationalcowboy-museum.org. An exhibit running **through January 2021** at the Mormon Church History Museum at Temple Square in Salt Lake City celebrates 150 years since Utah women became the first in the nation to vote under an equal suffrage law. Call 801-240-3310 or visit templesquare.com.

Quest for the West

The Eiteljorg's annual Quest for the West Art Sale & Show runs **Sept. 11–Oct. 11** at the Indianapolis museum in White River State Park. Call 317-636-9378 or visit eiteljorg.org.

Dodge City Days

Started in 1960, Dodge City Days is a 10-day event celebrating Western heritage and the rich history of that Kansas cow town. It unfolds **July 23–Aug. 2**. Visit dodgecitydays.org.

Send upcoming event notices to Wild West, 1919 Gallows Road, Suite 400, Vienna, VA 22182-4038. Submit at least four months in advance.

Bad to the Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

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If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

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Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed. Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the impeccable craftsmanship. If you don't feel like we cut you a fair deal, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price.

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— J., La Crescent, MN



"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."

— H., Arvada, CO



Rating of A+

HE'S EARNED HIS SPURS

EVER PROLIFIC WESTERN WRITER JOHNNY D. BOGGS
RECEIVES A LIFETIME NOD FROM WESTERN WRITERS OF AMERICA
BY CANDY MOULTON

Western Writers of America (WWA) has chosen Santa Fe-based Johnny D. Boggs as the 2020 recipient of its Owen Wister Award for lifetime contributions to Western literature. His dozens of published books and hundreds of articles, essays, columns and short stories certainly establish his claim on the award, and no one can argue with his status as the most recognized Western writer among his peers. WWA [westernwriters.org] has bestowed on Boggs eight Spur Awards and named him a finalist 14 times for his novels and short stories. He also boasts a Wrangler Award from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City as well as recognition from several other organizations and institutions. Boggs, who was raised in South Carolina and worked as a sportswriter in Texas before turning freelancer, publishes three to four books a year (novels and nonfiction), is a *Wild West* special contributor and edits the WWA journal, *Roundup*.



fiction, not plot-driven. I don't think I know how to write a plot-driven story. Through their decisions, right or wrong, characters drive the plot. Without characters there's no story. So, my focus is always on the character. People tuned into *Gunsmoke* for 20 years because of the characters. John Wayne is an unlikable SOB in *The Searchers*, but he's mesmerizing. And while the original *3:10 to Yuma* (the remake has the mentality of a video game) is basically about two men sitting in a hotel room talking, you can't stop watching, because those characters—and the choices they'll have to make—are utterly compelling.

Why do film, baseball and outlaws recur as themes in your writing?

Television and film drew me out West. I'm not where I am today without *Gunsmoke* and *The Dakotas*, *Rio Bravo* and *Ride the High Country*. What they showed me—and took me to—was vastly different than the swamps, tobacco fields and pine forests I knew. Film courses in college fueled my thirst for knowing more about filmmaking. My hometown was a baseball town, and as a sportswriter I covered plenty of baseball games—high school, American Legion, college and minor leagues. Even if I am the worst ballplayer to come out of Florence County, I turned into a pretty good kids' coach and umpire. There are some great stories to be found on baseball fields. Outlaws? Well, that's mostly the James-Younger Gang and the Kansas-Missouri border wars, and that's probably because those are as much Southern stories as they are Western stories. I don't like "the boys," but they fascinate me.

How do you settle on a topic to write about?

It has to be a subject I'm in the mood to tackle, something that I want to delve into, and I have to figure out how I can stamp it as my own. Or, this being a business, it's when an editor says I'll get paid to write about a particular subject.

Is it easier to conceive a plot or create characters?

Nothing's easy in this line of work, but the characters interest me. My late literary agent told me early on he wanted character-driven

In your historical fiction, how much is historical?

It depends on the novel and the character and what I'm trying to create, but I try to stay relatively true to what we know about the historical people. I'll often use their actual words, or something close to their actual words, in dialogue and stay as close to the historical record as possible. So, for example, Billy the Kid isn't going to be a hero saving the girl from Dracula, and Jesse James isn't going to be Tyrone Power fighting for the common man. In *The Raven's Honor*, about the last years of Sam Houston's life, I wasn't thinking about Sam; I was writing about my father. Both Sam and Daddy had their own demons and their own honor—and strong wives who weren't afraid to stand up to them. But, as I always say, "Don't quote me in your term paper."

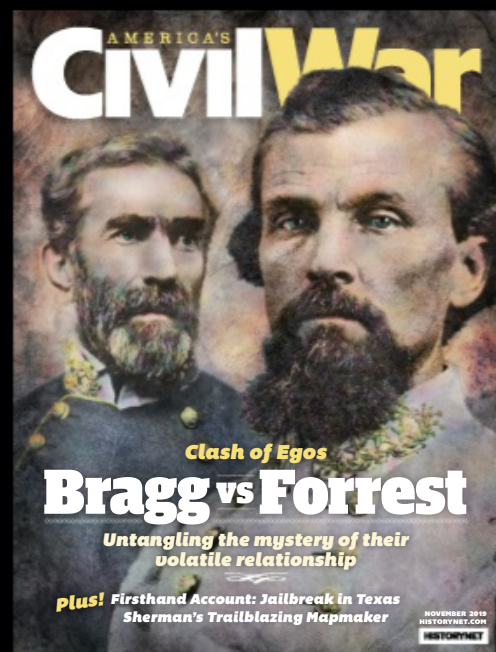
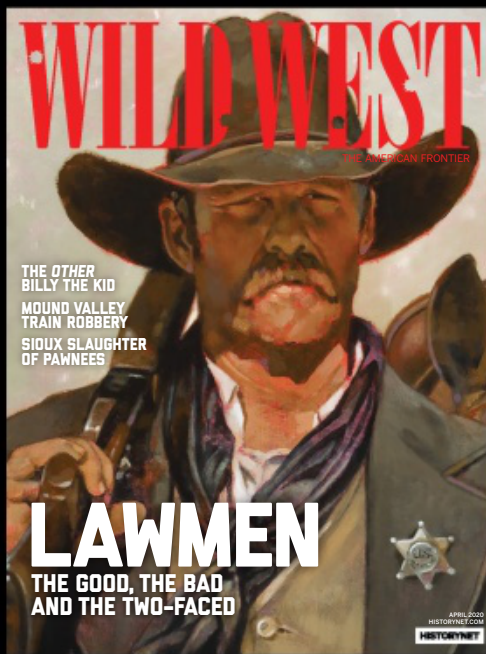
Which Western films feature the best characters?

Years ago screenwriter Burt Kennedy told me, "Always make your villain stronger than your hero. That way, when the hero defeats the villain at the end, it's a bigger accomplishment." So I'm drawn to those Westerns Burt wrote for actor Randolph Scott and director Budd Boetticher, particularly *Seven Men From Now*, *Comanche Station*, *The Tall T* and *Ride Lonesome*. You can see the mutual respect the hero and bad guy have for each other, and you can also see that, except for fate or luck, those roles could've been reversed. I'm not a huge fan of the original *The Magnificent Seven*, but it amazes me how in just one or two scenes you learn everything you need to know about those seven gunmen.

Which boast the best plots?

I like a plot when you can't figure out where it's headed—for example, *Bite the Bullet*, *Blood on the Moon*, *Ulyana's Raid* or spaghetti-like *A Bullet for the General* and *The Great Silence*. **WWW**

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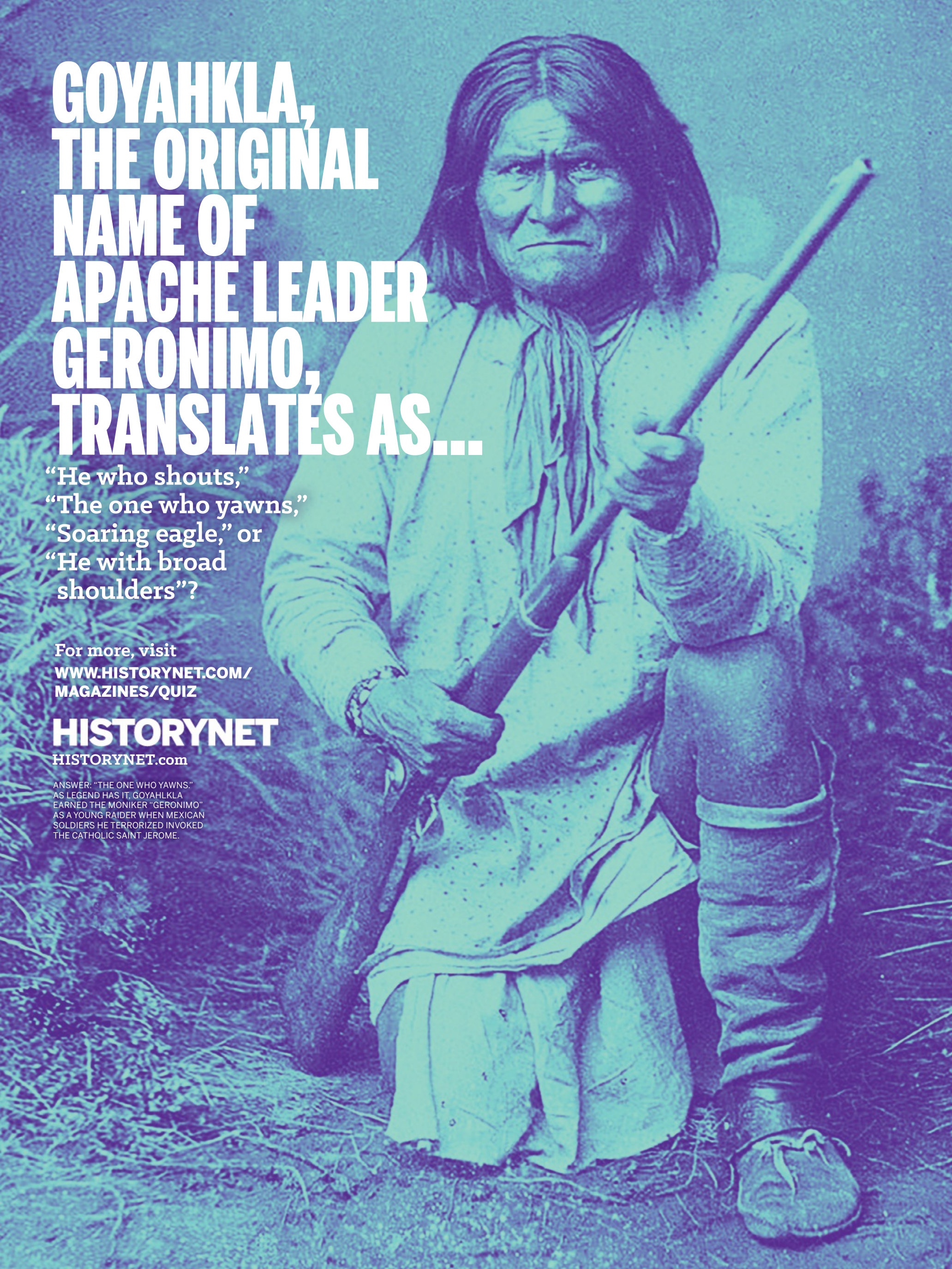
HIGHWAYLADY OF HELENA



On Oct. 9, 1891, authorities in Helena, Mont., arrested highwayman Henry Clark on suspicion of robbing a Montana Central Railway conductor of cash and his gold watch and then shooting patrolman John Grogan when the latter tried to disarm him. The conductor and Grogan, who survived his chest wound, each identified Clark as their assailant. Police also hauled in Clark's young accomplice, Charlie Miller (pictured), who was in possession of the purloined watch when arrested. To their surprise, jailers discovered Miller was in fact a woman—real name Bertha ("Bertie") Helen Forslund. The frightened 20-year-old was soon singing like a canary.

According to Forslund, a year earlier Clark had induced her to leave eastern Washington for Montana on a promise of steady work—provided she was willing to disguise herself as a boy. Sure enough, soon after the pair arrived in Missoula, a hotel owner hired the "young fellow" as a clerk. After Clark robbed a man of \$27, the pair moved on to Philipsburg, Butte and Anaconda, where Clark pulled off similar robberies. Recanting an earlier confession, Forslund claimed complete ignorance of his criminal activity. Not everyone was convinced. "She is a thoroughly depraved creature who should be sent to the penitentiary for life," opined the October 14 *Missoula Weekly Gazette*. "Clark, her pal, should be hanged." A week later the paper reported: "The Highwaylady of Helena has had her picture taken in male and female attire. Either as a boy or a girl she looks the festive hash slinger."

On November 2, however, a Helena jury acquitted Forslund after Clark testified she'd not been with him the night of the robbery/shooting. Neither was she prosecuted for complicity in the earlier robberies. Released from custody, she vowed to burn her "boy's clothes" and return home to Washington. Clark was sentenced to 40 years in the pen, although the judge did commend him—whether or not he had committed perjury—for shielding his female accomplice. **WW**



GOYAHKLA, THE ORIGINAL NAME OF APACHE LEADER GERONIMO, TRANSLATES AS...

“He who shouts,”
“The one who yawns,”
“Soaring eagle,” or
“He with broad
shoulders”?

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ANSWER: “THE ONE WHO YAWNS.”
AS LEGEND HAS IT, GOYAHKLA
EARNED THE MONIKER “GERONIMO”
AS A YOUNG RAIDER WHEN MEXICAN
SOLDIERS HE TERRORIZED INVOKED
THE CATHOLIC SAINT JEROME.



BIG PHIL THE CANNIBAL

FLEEING FROM HIS NATIVE PHILADELPHIA,
FUGITIVE CHARLES GARDNER LIVED
A LIFE OF ADVENTURE OUT WEST
AND SELDOM WENT HUNGRY
BY KELLEN CUTSFORTH

This rendering of Charles Gardner, who earned the moniker “Big Phil the Cannibal,” ran in *The Rocky Mountain News* in 1877.

Legends of cannibals and ravenous mountain men have long colored Western frontier lore. Most people are familiar with the 1846–47 Donner Party tragedy in the Sierra Nevada, and many have heard of “Liver-Eating” Johnston and Alferd Packer, the “Colorado Cannibal.” But few are aware of one of the more despicable figures ever to lurk in the Rocky Mountain West.

Eastern-born Charles Gardner was best known as “Big Phil,” a nickname referring to his massive frame (6 foot 6 and 230 pounds) and the fact he was from Philadelphia. During his westering life he picked up several other monikers, including “Mountain Phil” and “Old Phil.” Arapahos he’d encountered dubbed him “Big Mouth” for his propensity to consume large amounts of meat. Another detestable practice earned him the epithet “Big Phil the Cannibal.”

In 1844, amid anti-Catholic riots in Philadelphia, young Gardner reportedly killed a priest. Sentenced to life in the state penitentiary, he broke out the following year and fled from the “City of Brotherly Love.” In 1882 *The Denver Republican* interviewed an old-timer who’d known Gardner and still knew how to spin a good yarn. “One day, getting tired of prison life,” the man recounted of Phil’s escape, “he quietly killed the keeper by breaking him in two across his knee and started west. He drifted onto the Plains, where there was ample scope for his talents and no questions asked.”

In the vicinity of Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Gardner befriended two Army deserters. The trio of penniless drifters conspired to rob an elderly French Canadian trapper named La Chapelle who was known to keep a cache of money in his modest home. One night the bandits broke into the trapper’s hut. When La Chapelle wouldn’t surrender his money, Gardner proved how vicious he could be by slicing off one of the old man’s ears. The trapper turned over \$500 but bled to death anyway in the night.

It didn’t take long for word of the robbery to spread throughout Leavenworth. Throwing together a posse, the authorities set out after the fugitives. Riding his horse

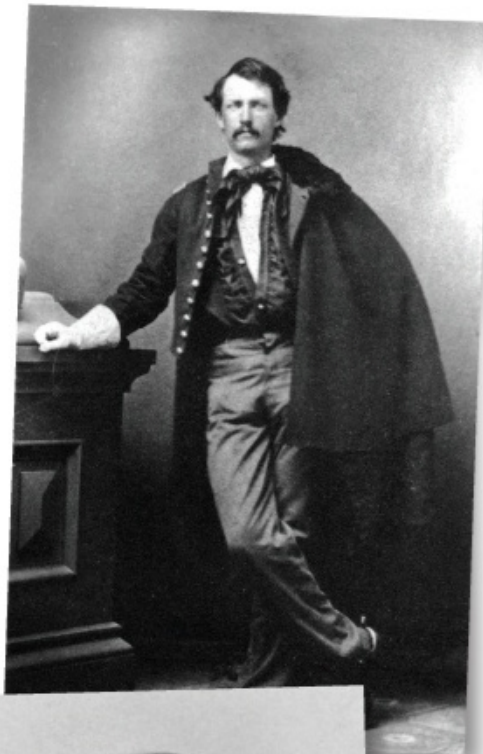
hard, Gardner outdistanced his cohorts. But the posse soon caught up to Phil's fellow robbers, and a fierce gun battle ensued. After shooting both men dead, the possemen tossed their bodies atop a makeshift funeral pyre and rode off in search of Big Phil, who had watched the entire episode from hiding. As the hoofbeats of his pursuers' mounts faded into the night, Gardner emerged and approached the smoldering corpses. He'd had not eaten anything for nearly two days, and the aroma of roasting flesh was apparently too much for him. It was then Phil committed his first act of cannibalism.

Fearing retribution for the robbery, maiming and death of La Chapelle, Gardner hitched a ride with a Mormon wagon train following the Platte River farther west. En route his new-found friends reportedly persuaded Phil to be baptized as a Latter-Day Saint. It didn't take. Gardner eventually ditched his traveling companions and landed a horseback stint delivering the mail between Fort Laramie (in future Wyoming Territory) and Fort Benton (in future Montana Territory).

In 1855, in the humiliating wake of the annihilation of brash young Lieutenant John Grattan and his 30-man troop near Fort Laramie, Army brass tapped Brig. Gen. William S. Harney to conduct a punitive strike against the Sioux. On August 24, late in the campaign season, Harney led his men out of Fort Kearny and marched them west on the Overland Trail along the Platte. Introduced to Gardner at some point, the general employed the hulking mail rider to carry dispatches to Fort Laramie.

Gardner and an accompanying Indian guide soon set out. On their return from the fort, the riders encountered a blizzard that quickly obscured the route. According to Big Phil's version of events, the pair lost their horses, their provisions and their way. Soon overcome by hunger, Gardner's companion sprang on him with a knife, but the larger man was able to subdue and kill his attacker. Big Phil then proceeded to fill his belly with the Indian's remains.

Given the delay and harsh weather, Harney and his men assumed Gardner and his guide had per-



ished in the storm. Imagine their surprise, then, when Big Phil staggered alone into camp, a sack draped over his shoulder. Greeting his stalwart mail rider, Harney asked what had become of the Indian. In response, Gardner pointed to the sack on the ground and said, "That's all that is left of him." Opening the sack, the general's orderly was disgusted to find a bloody human leg. While recounting his saga in camp, Gardner told soldiers he knew

he would need provisions if he were to make it back, so he removed both the Indian's legs. He then chuckled, pointed to the remaining leg and quipped, "And you see I have some provisions left."

A few years later Big Phil moved on to what in 1861 would become Colorado Territory, where he lived among the Arapahos. He built a wickiup along the Platte near the mouth of Cherry Creek and took two Arapaho wives, with whom he propagated several children. While there, Gardner recounted many

of his cannibalistic adventures to then Sheriff Edward W. "Ned" Wynkoop, a future Army officer of distinction generally regarded as a reliable source. In seeming contradiction, Wynkoop recalled Big Phil as quite genial and generous with food and other supplies.

Gardner's reputation for savagery grew in part due to his own propensity to tell tall tales, including one wherein the cannibal killed and consumed one of his Arapaho wives. While many such stories have been debunked, William Byers, founder of *The Rocky Mountain News*, echoed Wynkoop's belief Big Phil had indeed crossed that unspeakable boundary. "He made no secret of the fact that he had in emergency turned cannibal," the newspaperman said. "Upon being asked about the taste of human flesh, he answered that the head, hands and feet, when thoroughly cooked, tasted good, not unlike pork."

According to Wynkoop, in 1864 Big Phil moved to Virginia City in Montana Territory, where he was killed in a shootout with several men. The officer said nothing regarding the fate of the old cannibal's ample remains. **WWW**

Left: When he was sheriff of Arapahoe County, Colorado Territory, Ned Wynkoop heard Gardner's cannibalistic tales but found the man to be a rather genial sort. Below left: William Byers, founder of *The Rocky Mountain News* in Denver, claimed Big Phil once said human flesh, "when thoroughly cooked, tasted good, not unlike pork."

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FUNERAL of LAZARUS

Bummer leads the funeral procession, while Lazarus lies at rest with all four legs pointed heavenward, in a moving scene imagined by cartoonist Edward Jump.



EVERY DOG HAS HIS DAY

BUMMER AND LAZARUS WERE FREELOADERS
AHEAD OF THEIR TIME ON THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO
BY STEVEN TRENT SMITH

In October 1863 San Francisco cartoonist Edward Jump captured one of the finest funerals in the young city's history. Scores of prominent citizens make up the solemn cortege. The decedent, one Lazarus, is borne aloft on an unadorned wooden litter, all four of his legs pointing heavenward. Leading the procession is a black-and-white mutt named Bummer, who in life had been Lazarus' faithful companion. The city dog catcher brings up the rear. Presiding over the funeral ceremony is Emperor Joshua Abraham Norton, a celebrated local eccentric who, like Bummer and Lazarus, wandered the city streets relying on the kindness of strangers. Afterward, the body of the deceased was surrendered to Ernest F. Lorquin, taxidermist, who tactfully brought Lazarus to life for shelf display in a Montgomery Street saloon.

While all but the taxidermy was a figment of Jump's vivid imagination, the day Lazarus died was indeed a sad one for the "City by the Bay." For several years his endearing friendship with Bummer had captivated San Franciscans.

San Francisco in the 1860s was a rough-and-tumble town of 60,000 people, as many stray dogs and countless hordes of Norwegian rats. The streets may have been unpaved and the houses unpainted, but the aspiring city boasted

11 legitimate theaters, 34 newspapers in six languages and more than 600 drinking establishments. It was in the saloons Bummer earned his moniker. Many of the watering holes provided generous free lunches for customers. Smart fellow that he was, the dog knew that if he sidled over to a table and stared up at a potential benefactor with pleading eyes, he'd likely receive a handout. Bummer appeared to be part Newfoundland—black with a white patch on his chest—but no one could be certain of his pedigree. Tales were told about how he crossed the Great Plains with wagon-train emigrants, fighting Indians along the way. More prosaically, he was said to have been sired in nearby Petaluma.

Bummer was already well known among the denizens of Montgomery Street when his name first popped up in San Francisco's prominent daily *Alta California* on Jan. 18, 1861. The blurb recounted how he broke up a vicious dog fight. "A poor, lean, mangy cur was attacked by a larger dog and was getting unmercifully walloped," the reporter wrote, when Bummer rushed into the scrap to rescue the mangled victim. He led the underdog to a safe haven and patiently nursed him back to health.

When the dog's injuries healed, Bummer took him around to the saloons, teaching him the tricks of the bumming game. Patrons familiar with the story of the newcomer's miraculous recovery promptly dubbed him Lazarus. The dogs' typical day began with a refreshing dip in the Portsmouth Square fountain, followed by a busy day of begging, eating and sleeping in doorways—Lazarus always on the inside, his head on the ever-vigilant Bummer's flank. It's no exaggeration to say San Franciscans fawned over the pair. Newspapers regularly chronicled their escapades. Their likenesses, as rendered by cartoonist Jump, hung in windows all over town. They marched at the head of parades. They even appeared onstage in an 1862 burletta titled *Life in San Francisco*. Beyond their antics, Bummer and Lazarus represented real value to the health and safety of the city, as both were world-class ratters. A bag of 200 a night was common, and on one occasion they killed more than 400 of the vermin. Men wagered gold specie on which would kill the most. Lazarus usually emerged the victor.

Like the rats, however, stray dogs were also a public nuisance. In April 1862 the city's Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance that any canine found on the streets unmuzzled would be subject to impoundment and, if they remained unclaimed, death. Poor Lazarus was swept up in the purge by a zealous dog catcher, who threw the celebrity hound into the pound. When word of his incarceration spread, there was talk of lynching the civil servant. But as the appointed hour of Lazarus' execution approached, saloonkeeper Frederick Martin paid the pooch's \$5 bail, to the relief of dog lovers citywide. Thereafter, hundreds of concerned citizens raised a petition asking the supervisors to safeguard Bummer and Lazarus by grandfathering them in under the ordinance. As the panel deliberated in chambers, it was rumored the two dogs sat outside to await the verdict. To the satisfaction of all, the board granted the pair "the freedom of the town."

The dogs repaid San Francisco's confidence in them just a week later when they stopped a runaway wagon careening along Clay Street. Bummer took one side, Lazarus the other. As the intersection of Clay and Kearny loomed, Bummer leapt in front of the horse, stopping it in his tracks and thus preventing a catastrophe. On another occasion the dogs aided a police officer in the arrest of a miscreant by reportedly tearing the man's clothing and "barking" his legs, forcing him to his knees. That said, they did occasionally live up to the old adage "Dogs will be dogs." In July 1863,



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Born into slavery, Hiram Young founded a company in Independence, Mo., that turned out wagons for emigrants, freighters and farmers.

EARNING INDEPENDENCE, ONE BOARD AT A TIME

HIRAM YOUNG ESCAPED SLAVERY AND ACHIEVED FINANCIAL SUCCESS BY MANUFACTURING YOKES AND WAGONS IN FRONTIER MISSOURI
BY DAVID MCCORMICK

Hiram Young had a knack for whittling, and it certainly paid off, as he reportedly earned his freedom and that of wife Matilda by carving and selling ox yokes. Young was born into slavery in Tennessee circa 1814 and later moved to Missouri's Greene County with owner George Young. After first buying his wife's freedom, hardworking Hiram purchased his own freedom from Young in 1847. Aptly enough the couple moved to Liberty, in west central Missouri, just 20 miles from the Kansas border.

In 1850 Hiram and Matilda relocated a dozen miles south to Independence, a primary outfitting hub of the Santa Fe trade. Within a year Hiram, according to his own later testimony in a court affidavit, had set himself up in the "manufactory of yokes and wagons." His illiteracy proved no obstacle to financial success that bustling decade. By 1860 he was turning out tens of thousands of yokes and more than 800 wagons per year. That year's census recorded an inventory of completed 300 wagons valued at \$48,000 and 6,000 yokes at \$13,500, while his capital investment in the business totaled between

\$30,000 and \$35,000. He touted his business with boldface ads in the local newspapers: **HIRAM YOUNG, MANUFACTURER OF WAGONS, OX YOKES & BOWS.** Young also owned \$36,000 worth of real property and \$20,000 of personal property, ranking him among the most successful entrepreneurs in Independence in the decade leading up to the Civil War.

Young employed between 50 and 60 men on his 480-acre farm in the Little Blue Valley, some 6 miles east of Independence, and about 20 others in his Liberty Street shop in town. Seven forges operated in the shop, where he kept on hand a large inventory of materials needed to turn out yokes and wagons—thousands of board feet of lumber, 200 tons of iron, 5,000 pounds of charcoal and 3,000 pounds of coal. His workforce comprised both white and black men. Controversially, at least when regarded in hindsight, three of the latter were his own slaves, and he contracted for additional labor from surrounding slaveholders. That said, all were trained in the trade and received the going wage. Young also regularly boarded employees, regardless of race, in his own home.

By decade's end thousands of freighters and emigrants had plied the trails between Missouri and California aboard Hiram Young wagons. Built for the Santa Fe trade, they were capable of hauling up to 8,000 pounds of cargo. The proud entrepreneur had **HIRAM YOUNG AND CO.** and the purchaser's initials branded onto each wagon.

The Civil War put a brake to commerce in Independence. Surrounding Jackson County had been settled largely by Scotch-Irish pioneers from Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia. With the outbreak of the war in April 1861 Young, cognizant of the strong secessionist sentiment in the region and justly fearing the escalating violence of the border ruffians, thought it best to remove his family to Fort Leavenworth, Kan. There he continued his trade as best he could.

Not until three years after the war did Young return to Independence, only to find his farm and business in tatters and the economy in shambles. While the spread of rail service had cut into the commercial wagon business, everyday folk still needed wagons and yokes. Young's work ethic also remained intact. He opened a planing mill on the site of his former business. Plenty of ups and downs followed, including an 1873 fire that razed the shop.



HIRAM YOUNG

It took Young a number of years to recover financially, but by 1880 he'd capitalized his new business to the tune of \$10,800. Just as before he had the inventory of hardware needed to succeed, including a boiler, a 12-horsepower engine, five circular saws and one handsaw, as well as thousands of board feet of lumber. Census officials recorded the value of the business at \$14,000—far less than that of his previous wagon venture, but it seemed solid enough on paper. In fact, Young owed a lot of money.

In 1879, seeking to recoup losses incurred during the war, Young filed suit against the government of the United States, seeking \$19,300 in property damages, a claim he later raised to \$22,100. The losses included 40 head of beef cattle, valued at \$2,800; 37 wagons, at \$9,250; and 7,000 bushels of corn, at \$10,050. Young asserted that U.S. troops stationed in the area between 1862 and '63 had confiscated the claimed items. The persistent entrepreneur would not live to see the outcome of his claim. He died intestate on Jan. 22, 1882, leaving an estate plagued by debt. The federal case dragged until 1907, when the U.S. Court of Claims ruled it had no merit.

Hiram Young had proved the West offered opportunity to any hardworking entrepreneur, no matter his skin color. Although illiterate himself, he'd ensured daughter Amanda received a college education. Young had made a fortune in Independence and gained the regard of peers in his community. While the Civil War had ruined him, he'd worked hard to build a new business, and his financial straits cast no shadow on his achievements. He was buried in the white section of his adopted hometown's Woodlawn Cemetery. His wife and daughter rest by his side.

In 1887, five years after his death, an Independence elementary school built to serve black children, funded in part by Young and originally named for Frederick Douglass was renamed in the late entrepreneur's honor. Daughter Amanda Jane Young Brown served as principal of Hiram Young School for a time. Rebuilt in 1935, the building still stands. In 2011 the Independence School District presented Truman Heritage Habitat for Humanity—a nonprofit devoted to building affordable housing for needy residents of eastern Jackson County—a 6-acre property, on which stands the Young School, a reminder that anything is possible for those willing to work for it. **WWW**

BY THE LATE 1850s THOUSANDS OF FREIGHTERS AND EMIGRANTS HAD PLIED THE TRAILS BETWEEN MISSOURI AND CALIFORNIA ABOARD HIRAM YOUNG WAGONS



Chinese railroad workers were known for hard work, but they often made time for tea, as depicted in Mian Situ's oil on canvas *Cutting a Path, Sierra Nevada, 1866*.

FAR EAST TO FAR WEST

BORN IN SOUTHERN CHINA, CALIFORNIA ARTIST MIAN SITU CHRONICLES THE CHINESE EXPERIENCE IN THE AMERICAN WEST
BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Amid a group of Chinese immigrants blasting and chiseling a path through the rugged Sierra Nevada for the Central Pacific Railroad, one man takes a rare and welcome tea break. The details in *Cutting a Path, Sierra Nevada, 1866*, a 32-by-36-inch oil on canvas by Mian Situ, bring humanity and realism to the scene. But then, Situ knows this story well.

"The track through the mountains was built along steep-sided, avalanche-prone slopes," he says. "Sometimes the railroad clung to bare granite cliffs. Nine tunnels were chipped out, totaling 5,158 feet in length. Engineering and constructing a railroad

through the Sierra Nevada had long been considered an impossible folly. It took Theodore Judah, a brilliant young engineer from New York, and an army of 12,000 diminutive Chinese workers to prove the skeptics wrong."

Situ also has empathy and regard for the people he paints. "I did the painting to record the significance of this piece of history and pay respect to my ancestors who helped to build the railroad in the West," he explains.

Born to villagers in Guangdong Province in southern China—"where most of those early Chinese immigrants to America came from"—Situ later moved to a small town, where he became



fascinated with art as a teen. Pursuing his passion, he studied at the prestigious Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts, where he received a master's degree and taught classes in oil painting.

"But life in China at that time was like living 'behind the closed door,'" he says. "There was such a strong desire among Chinese youth at the time to leave the country. I was one of them. I had been studying Western art for all these years. I was also curious to see the West."

In 1987 Situ came to the United States. Moving to Canada a year later, he returned stateside in 1998 and now lives in San Dimas, east of Los Angeles. The artist's career skyrocketed after John J. Geraghty, longtime trustee of L.A.'s Autry Museum of the American West, invited him to participate in the 2001 Masters of the American West Fine Art Exhibition. The next year Situ's *Powder Monkeys* won the Masters of the American West Purchase Award and other honors at the Autry.

Represented by Trailside Galleries in Jackson, Wyo., and Scottsdale, Ariz., and American Legacy



Fine Arts in Pasadena, Calif., Situ [miansitu.net] tries his hand at historical settings, landscapes and other subjects. "There is a saying, 'Never too old to learn,'" he says. "I feel I am learning every day to perfect my art. I am still not satisfied with what I am doing, so I will focus on making my art stronger."

But he has mastered one important lesson. "An artist needs not only to tell how the story unfolds, but also to let viewers share how you feel about the story." **WW**

A photo of Mian Situ appears on P. 6 of this issue. To see and learn more, visit WildWestMag.com.

Other Situ oils include (clockwise from top left) *The Gold Nugget Chinese Camp, 1850*; *Trail of Life at Canyon de Chelly*; *The Overseer, San Francisco, 1905*; and *Moving on the Yuba River—Gold Seekers, 1849*.



Tamahay spoke out against war with the United States, but he was an old man who could not stop the Sioux Uprising of 1862, which included *The Siege of New Ulm, Minn.*, depicted in a painting by H. Aug. Schwabe.

BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND

A ONETIME WARRIOR OF RECKLESS DARING, DAKOTA ELDER TAMAHAY WISELY REJECTED WAR AGAINST THE SPRAWLING UNITED STATES
BY JOHN KOSTER

By the early 1860s the Santee (Isanti or Eastern) Dakotas were a starving people living on a cramped reservation in Minnesota. Yet when disaffected tribal leaders met in council to foment what became known as the Sioux Uprising of 1862, one prominent voice spoke against waging such a futile war with the expanding United States. The elderly speaker supported himself with a cane and gazed from beneath a top hat with his remaining, albeit failing, eye. Tamahay, who'd fought with reckless courage in intertribal clashes over the past half century, advocated peace.

"I cannot see well now, but I can see with my mind's eye the stream of blood you are about to pour upon the bosom of this mother [Earth] of ours," said Tamahay, who in his mid-80s was



likely the oldest warrior in council. "I stand before you on three legs, but the third leg has brought me wisdom. I have traveled much. I have visited among the people whom you think to defy. This means the total surrender of our beautiful land, the land of a thousand lakes and streams. You are about to commit an act like that of the porcupine who climbs a tree, balances himself upon a springy bough and then gnaws off the very bough upon which he is sitting....I do not say you have no cause to complain, but to resist is self-destruction. I am done."

Chief Little Crow, according to later accounts by his son, also noted the Dakotas were heavily outnumbered and argued for peace. But when younger warriors derided the chief as a coward, he not only approved the war but also led it. It turned out to be the disaster

Tamahay had foreseen. After a rampage of vengeful murder and rape, the Dakota warriors were evicted from Minnesota, and 38 of their leaders were publicly hanged en masse. Little Crow managed to escape the gallows but was killed a year later while raiding. Tamahay outlived him. Once willing to throw his life away in battle, the old man had stood up under peer pressure to warn his tribe that the days of Pontiac and Tecumseh were long finished.

Born circa 1776 in the vicinity of present-day Winona, Minn., Tamahay—according to Sioux biographer Dr. Charles Eastman—got his odd name from a fish. From his earliest days he was mischievous and insatiably curious. As a teenager on a group visit to Michigan with Dakota Chief Wabasha the boy went sightseeing when he spotted a mother pig and her brood. Intrigued by the piglets, he snatched one up for a closer look, prompting the sow to chase the terrified boy into a lake. Amused tribal elders nicknamed the boy Tamahay (“pike”), after the arm-length freshwater fish. The name stuck. Years later after Tamahay met U.S. Army Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, the noted explorer, and heard his own Dakota moniker echoed by a translator, he wore the fishy name with pride rather than rueful resignation.

Not long after his run-in with the angry sow 17-year-old Tamahay lost one of his eyes in an unspecified accident. He was distraught. “There will be no pleasure for me now, and I shall be ridiculed even by my enemies,” he announced to his peers. “It will be well for me to enter soon into Paradise, for I shall be happy spending my youth there. But I will sell my life dearly.”

Indeed, Tamahay gained renown for the chances he took fighting enemy warriors. Once he and a friend altered their telltale hairstyles and garb and strode straight into an Ojibwe (Chippewa) camp to flirt with girls, ready to take on any bucks contesting their romantic intentions. Sure enough, when an angry young suitor sprang from the bushes in a jealous rage, Tamahay slew and scalped him. The fight attracted a swarm of enraged Ojibwes, forcing the Dakota teens to swim for it, much as Tamahay had from the sow.

Those close to Tamahay knew better than to question his courage. But in 1810 when Shaw-



nee Chief Tecumseh called for an intertribal uprising against the United States in support of British interests in the region, the young warrior declined. Furthermore, he encouraged those Sioux willing to fight to do so in support of the United States. At one point during Tamahay’s subsequent trading ventures the British imprisoned him at Fort McKay, a captured American garrison safeguarding the town of Prairie du Chien in what would become Wisconsin. By the time the British abandoned and set fire to the post in 1815, Tamahay had been released and

resumed trading with the Yankees.

“Your friends the Americans’ fort is on fire,” a departing allied warrior shouted in jest to Tamahay, who let out a whoop and ran into the blazing compound to retrieve the American flag. Grateful federal officials presented Tamahay with the flag, a medal and a stylish top hat its owner promptly stuffed full of letters of recommendation. On state occasions Tamahay wore the stovepipe, which became a trademark.

Tamahay was so celebrated a friend of the United States that rather too many people wanted to buy drinks for him. One frontier trader who treated the warrior to a shot of whiskey soon regretted it. Tamahay went home to sleep off the drink, but when he woke, his cravings for another drove him back to the trader’s cabin door. There he stood amid a blizzard, singing his death song at top volume. When the soundly sleeping trader failed to stir, Tamahay clambered up on the roof and dropped down the mud chimney into the embers of a dying fire.

The accommodating trader finally got the message. Handing Tamahay a tin pail of liquor, he again showed him the door. “Be good and go home,” he pleaded. The sated warrior complied.

Tamahay remained hale and hearty all his days. As an old man he prevailed in a wrestling match with a soldier on sentry duty who’d threatened him with a musket and bayonet. But in 1862 even he recognized the Dakotas were no match for the United States and did what he could to keep the peace. Two years later he died of natural causes at Fort Pierre, Dakota Territory, having long outlived his predictions of an early death. **WWW**

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Journey of the Heart,
48-by-60-inch
oil on canvas,
by Roseta Santiago

WILDWEST
THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

STYLE

We admire Roseta Santiago's evocative paintings, visit a New Mexico trading post, journey into the national parks with Amtrak Vacations and reveal a mask maker

STYLE



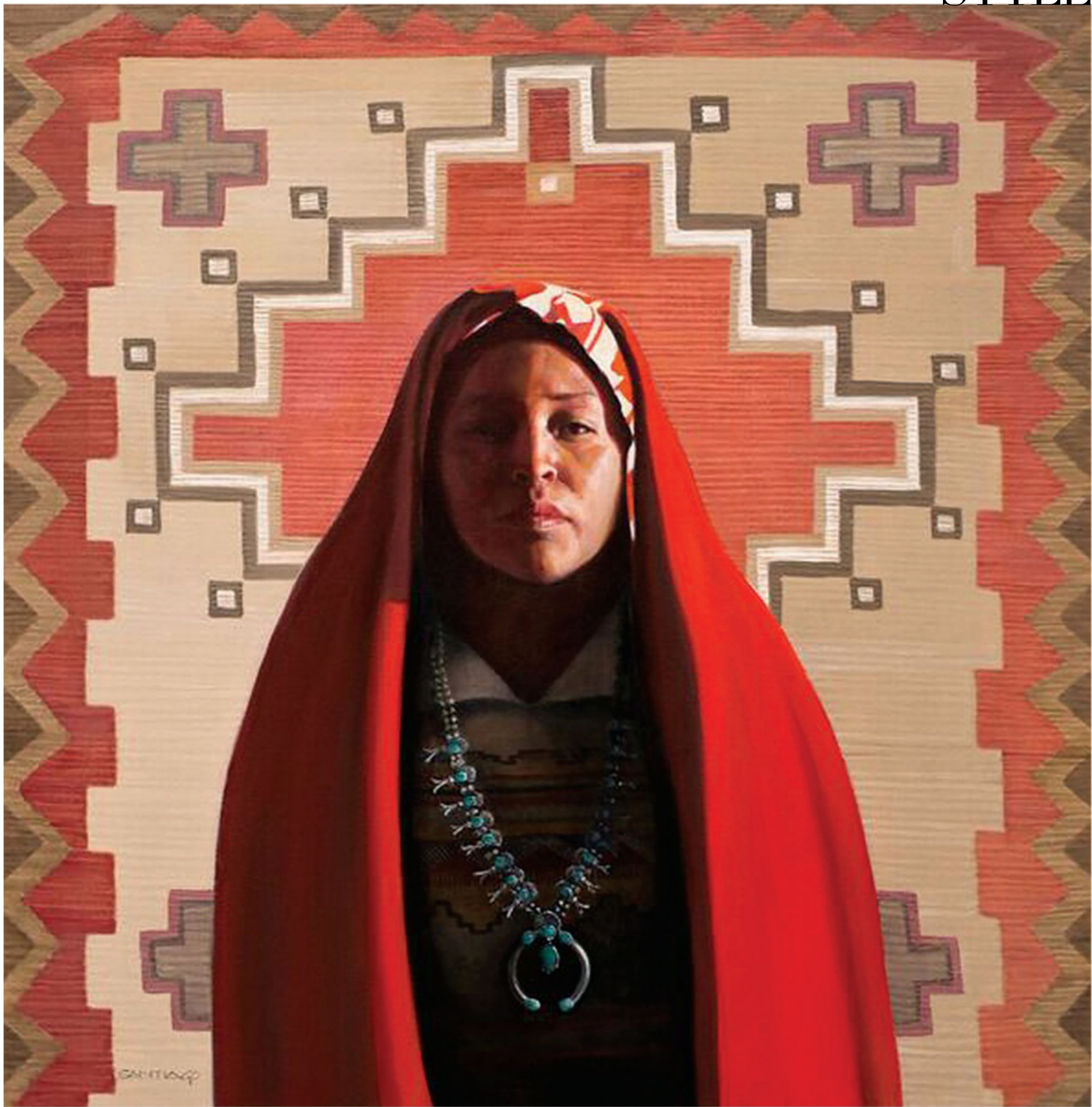
ART

Roseta Santiago

Santa Fe artist Roseta Santiago's still life and figurative paintings are exceptional works of Western art. Recognized and collected internationally, they convey the artist's understanding of light and shadow to reflect the depth and character of her subjects. Like soul and spirit, they radiate through the depths of the oil to transmit inner strength, fragility, honesty and beauty. Born and raised in Washington, D.C., Santiago [rosetasantiago.com] moved to New Mexico in 2000. Her surroundings inspire her. "I paint every day that I can," she says. "And every day I have something new to say about art and why I am so consumed. I am completely inspired and will celebrate my senses and my life by painting and storytelling, because I cannot help myself. It is this gift to paint my thoughts that inspires me to pick up my brushes and embark on a journey of discovery. That is why I paint." To see more of her work, visit Blue Rain Gallery [blueraingallery.com].

Fox Dancer,
16-by-20-inch
open canvas, \$145

Ancient Passage,
48-by-48-inch
oil on canvas



Weaver's Daughter,
40-by-40-inch
oil on canvas



Fox Dancer,
16-by-20-inch
open canvas, \$145



Gatherer,
16-by-20-inch
oil on canvas

Ancient Art I,
12-by-12-inch
oil on panel



Regalia,
30-by-22-inch
oil on canvas,
by Roseta Santiago

STYLE

SHOP

Rio Bravo

"I was too lazy to work and too honest to steal," quips Randy Rodriguez about why he opened Rio Bravo Trading Co. [riobravo-tradingcompany.blogspot.com] 35 years ago in Santa Fe. His shop is a trove of cowboy and Indian collectibles, including jewelry, pottery, saddles, spurs, hats, boots, chaps, moccasins, rifles, drums, Navajo rugs, Western art and period relics.

Every piece has a story, and Rodriguez is willing to share it. He'll also tell you he's happy to be alive, as in 2019 he had open-heart surgery, which his doctor had warned was a 50-50 proposition. His three grown children and grandchild are also grateful.

To celebrate his new lease on life, Rodriguez is eating right, exercising and, during the COVID-19 slowdown, refurbishing the ol' trading post, including tearing up carpeting that's been underfoot since day one. Customers now browse atop shiny new ceramic tile floors. The shop owner lives nearby on 80 acres he shares with his dog, Duke. Stop by Rio Bravo Trading Co., at 411 S. Guadalupe St., Santa Fe. For more info call 505-982-0230.



Santa Fe Trader

Randy Rodriguez stands outside his trading post, which has welcomed customers for 35 years.



STYLE

TRAVEL

All Aboard!



Traversing the great American West by rail is a relaxing and memory-making experience. Amtrak Vacations makes it simple by packaging scenic trips aboard its *California Zephyr*, *Coast Starlight* and *Southwest Chief* trains to such magnificent national parks as Yellowstone, Yosemite, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Arches and the Grand Canyon. Travelers disembark to explore the mountains, gorges, waterfalls, meadows and forests that grace our public lands. Vacation packages include sightseeing tours, meals and hotel accommodations, with some nights spent snoozing aboard your sleeper car. Visit Amtrak Vacations' website [amtrakvacations.com] for a full list of itineraries and costs.



Grand Canyon



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California Zephyr



Amtrak Vacations also offers a popular seven-day Grand Tetons and Yellowstone Rail Journey out of Chicago.



GOODS

Breathe in Beauty

In this unusual time of mask wearing, the art of mask making has naturally flourished. Wendy Bayne, for one, has been busy at her Tappan, N.Y., home creating reversible, hand-sewn masks. She sells her Wendy's Patchwork Masks for \$14.95 each (plus \$4.50 shipping). Bayne began making masks when her grandson started treatments for leukemia in 2019. "He needed washable, reusable kid-size masks, and I just jumped right in," she explains. "Then COVID-19 hit, and everyone needed a mask." Customers can send Bayne fabric they like or choose from what she has on hand. Contact the fine mask maker at bayne-wendy@gmail.com.

Terrorizing a Town

In Charles Marion Russell's *Smoke of a .45* more than one gun is being triggered during a deadly shootout in a town with no name.



DEAD MEN FOR BREAKFAST

What was the wildest, wooliest town in the Old West?
Several candidates aspired to that dubious distinction

By Ron Soodalter



“T

here is no law west of St. Louis and no God west of Fort Smith.” So went one oft-repeated Old West saying, though the designated godless community shifted ever westward with the burgeoning flood of emigrants. While the fake news of the frontier era sensationalized much of the lore of the wide-open towns of the 1860s–80s—both to shock Easterners and hawk dime novels—there was no dearth of genuine Sodoms and Gomorrah on the American frontier.

Formal law enforcement was generally a few jumps behind the thrown-together rail stops and boomtowns, and when lawmen did arrive, they were often ineffectual, crooked or both. As a result, the most heinous of crimes were often judged—if at all—in the folksiest of manners. For example, in July 1884 when former Dodge City assistant marshal “Mysterious Dave” Mather abruptly shot and killed his replacement and longtime nemesis Tom

Nixon on a public sidewalk, a jury acquitted Mather on the grounds of self-defense. Although Nixon had made no move to draw, jurists seemingly reasoned that had Dave not killed Tom, Tom eventually would have done in Dave. They were probably right.

During the two decades the West was truly wild, countless towns developed reputations as virtual hellholes, wherein drinking, gambling and prostitution were rampant, and a man’s life was scarcely worth the cost of a .44 slug. Still later, in places like Cromwell, Okla., lawlessness persisted. While Tombstone (Arizona Territory), Deadwood (Dakota Territory) and Dodge City (Kansas) retain their hard-earned reputations as the most notorious towns of the Old West, plenty of other locales are “worthy” of consideration. Body counts in Tombstone triggered a saying the town “had a man for breakfast every morning,” but similar “cold breakfasts” were on the menu elsewhere. What follows is a compendium of 10 (well, make that unlucky 13, as we lump



OGALLALA, NEBRASKA

together four Montana Territory towns) of the *other* roughest communities where Western badmen—and not-so-good women—once hung their hats.

Ogallala, Nebraska

The settlement saddled with the sobriquet “Gomorraah of the Plains” started life two years after the American Civil War as a tank town along the Union Pacific Railroad. It comprised a water tower and a small section house until enterprising businessmen established a supply center to service the area’s trappers, soldiers and buffalo hunters. Soon the railroad connected Ogallala with the East and its growing demand for beef. Bordering the South Platte River and surrounded by seemingly endless miles of lush prairie grass, it was perfectly situated as a shipping hub for Texas herds. And when the Union Pacific added a holding pen and loading chute in 1874, the town’s place in the cattle industry was secured. Longhorns by the millions shipped east from the rail hub or were herded farther north to the newly established Indian reservations. Legendary cattleman Ab Blocker estimated some half million cattle were driven through Ogallala in 1883 and ’84 alone.

Predictably, the “Hell on Wheels” town soon featured every sinful attraction with which to lure drovers at trail’s end. As cowboy Andy Adams recalled, “The ends of the earth’s iniquity

had gathered in Ogallala.” Reputedly, it was in one of its saloons that cowhand Sam Bass and partner Joel Collins planned their careers as highwaymen. After selling a herd they’d driven for a group of Texas ranchers, they’d kept the money, only to lose it all to the town’s gamblers and soiled doves. Needing a stake, they opted to take it from stagecoaches and trains. The rest, as they say, is history.



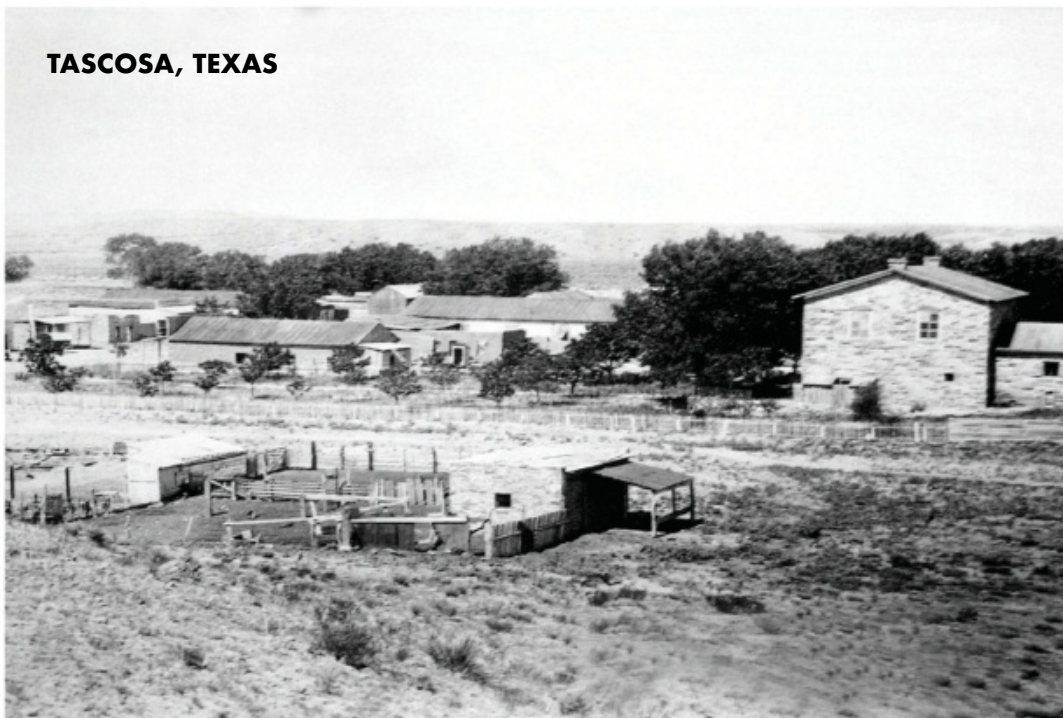
five times as he bathed in the Platte. On another notable occasion, after pistoleer Ben Thompson’s kid brother, Billy, shot and killed a saloon owner, Ben’s friends Bat Masterson and Buffalo Bill Cody effected Billy’s escape.

Ogallala recorded 17 killings during its decade-long heyday—an impressive tally, given its small population. As one cowboy boasted, “There’s gold flowing across the tables, liquor across the bars and blood across the floors.” But when the cattle boom

During the six months of the year when no trail herds were slated to arrive, Ogallala shrank into a dull, ugly little settlement, its gamblers and prostitutes temporarily migrating to such bustling cities as Cheyenne. When the herds returned, it again sprang to life.

Given the mix of whiskey and impulsive young men, violence was perhaps inevitable. Hollywood depictions aside, Ogallala history notes only one instance of a shootout between a cowboy and a gambler. Most fights were between the drovers themselves, the first recorded in 1875 when one shot another

TASCOSA, TEXAS



ended in the mid-1880s, Ogallala once again became a lifeless, dust-blown frontier outpost, its glory days a memory.

Tascosa, Texas

It took some doing to be dubbed the “Hardest Place on the Frontier,” but most chroniclers concur Tascosa earned it. “It made most other Western hell towns look like retirement communities,” says Western historian Frederick Nolan, who ranks Tascosa tougher than Tombstone, deadlier than Dodge, badder than Bodie and damnable as Deadwood. Alliteration aside, Tascosa was indeed a hellhole of the first order, providing a refuge for grifters, gamblers, gunmen, outlaws and prostitutes.

For years the tiny adobe village of 300 residents had neither government nor law of any sort to keep things tame, despite its designation as Oldham County seat. Life was cheap, with some 30 men killed over a six-year period. In March 1886 badmen bearing such colorful monikers as “Animal,” “Squirrel-Eye” and the “Catfish Kid” engaged in a gunfight that left four men dead and two badly wounded.

Widespread cattle rustling further darkened Tascosa’s already dismal reputation. Perched amid cattle country at the southern terminus of the trail to Dodge City, the town was heralded as the “Cowboy Capital of the Panhandle.” However, in the spring of 1883 the cowboys—resentful of their long hours and low pay, as well as the powerful cattle syndicates’ stringent rules about starting one’s own herd—went on strike, for which they were blacklisted. In retribution many turned to openly rustling the big outfits’ stock, ultimately pilfering some half million head, which they cached just across the border in New Mexico Territory. Despite the efforts of illustrious lawman Pat Garrett and a band of hired regulators, the rustling continued largely unabated.

Tascosa died a lingering death, first going into decline in the mid-1880s when the railroad bypassed town. Then came the harsh winter of 1886–87 (aka the “Big Die-Up”), which claimed countless head of cattle, bankrupting many of the big outfits and ending Tascosa’s prominent role in the cattle industry. Today all that remains of the town once “deadlier than Dodge” are the ruins of its stone courthouse and Boot Hill.

Pioche, Nevada

Perhaps the least-known of all Western sinks of violence and depravity, Pioche was settled in the 1860s as a silver mining camp. Initially a peaceful district, it didn’t remain so for long. Indeed, its founder, a Mormon prospector, was later poisoned amid a court battle over a disputed claim. “About one-half of the community are thieves, scoundrels and murderers,” a Nevada state mineralogist reported to the Legislature in 1873. “Hired gunmen were imported at the rate of \$20 a day to fight mining claim encroachments. The sheriff’s office could count on about \$40,000 a year in bribe money. It was so bad 75 people were killed before one died a natural death.”

Corruption was rampant. When Pioche was named the Lincoln County seat in 1871, local officials drew up plans for a courthouse, at a cost of \$26,400. The project became a cash cow, taking years to complete at more than three times the original estimate. The interest charges on loans continued to mount until the last payment was made in 1937—four years after the building had been condemned. The final cost tallied \$1 million. The “Million-Dollar Courthouse” still stands and is open to visitors for free tours.

But it was for gunplay and outlawry Pioche achieved notoriety. Stagecoaches often carried mine payrolls, and robberies were common. Outlaw Jack Harris robbed the stages so often that Wells, Fargo & Co. finally paid him a weekly stipend *not* to hold them up. He took the company’s money—and kept right on robbing the coaches.

Among Pioche’s deadliest denizens was gun for hire Morgan Courtney. Born Richard Moriarty, he held the distinction of being disliked by virtually everyone. Courtney had reportedly fled to Pioche after shooting a Virginia City bartender in the back



PIOCHE, NEVADA



BODIE, CALIFORNIA

during an argument. He skated on that charge and was later acquitted for having gunned down Pioche barfly John Sullivan. It seems Sullivan had called him a “damned son of a bitch”—apparently grounds for acquittal in that time and place. Courtney ultimately made the mistake of verbally abusing local lowlife George McKinney, who put five bullets in the young psychopath’s back. No one shed a tear. McKinney, too, was acquitted, the tried-and-true “son of a bitch” defense having worked yet again. The epitaph on Courtney’s wooden grave marker atop Boot Hill reads, FEARED BY SOME, RESPECTED BY FEW, DETESTED BY OTHERS.

Courtney and Sullivan were but two of 40 men killed between 1870 and ’75, a tally that more than earns Pioche a place in the pantheon of Western snake pits.

Bodie, California

Bodie was named—or, rather, misnamed—after W.S. Bodey (or Body), one of a group of prospectors to strike gold on the site in 1859. Luckless Bodey perished that winter in a blizzard. The pickings soon waned, and Bodie (pronounced BO-dee) languished for years before an 1875 cave-in exposed a stunning vein of gold dubbed the Bullion Lode. Overnight the town became a mining mecca, with all the usual attendant sin and depravity. With pardonable hyperbole, the *Engineering & Mining Journal* reported, “Bodie contains about 6,000 inhabitants, who support 156 drinking places, several newspapers and many attorneys-at-law, without a single church.”

As Bodie burgeoned, the violence grew apace. Soon its reputation for mayhem inspired Mark Twain-like spoofs at the rough-hewn inhabitants’ expense, with humorist E.H. Clough coining the term “Bad Man From Bodie” as the title of one particularly outlandish tall tale. The alliterative moniker soon became a euphemism for badmen everywhere.

“A Bodie man never has two disputes with the same man,” Nevada’s *Tybo Sun* wrote with editorial tongue in cheek. “This is explained by the fact that he kills him at the first quarrel.” In sarcastic reply the editor of the *Bodie Standard* quipped, “The Bodie man always eats his victim after killing him.”

Jesting aside, there is no question actual killings occurred, as Bodie’s *Daily Free Press* attested on a regular basis. Reportedly taking umbrage at all the negative attention his town was receiving, a local businessman defended Bodie as one of the “quietest,

most law-abiding mining districts,” pointing out that no one had been convicted of murder in a year and a half. While technically correct, he’d neglected to point out that over the same period district courts had *tried* 20 murder cases, all ending in acquittals. In every case, apparently, the guaranteed get-out-of-jail defense was simply to blame the deceased for having provoked the fight.

“Bodie was, in its flowering days, known as the wickedest mining camp in the world,” one longtime resident recalled. “Passions flamed high and quickly on little provocation, and many men died swiftly. It was the deadliest camp in the West.”

Apparently, the town’s reputation endures. At the outset of the 1967 Burt Kennedy Western *Welcome to Hard Times* a lone desperado descends on a hardscrabble settlement, beats, rapes and kills several of its residents and then burns the town to the ground, all without uttering a single word. In the credits he’s listed only as the Man from Bodie.

Today one of California’s most touristed ghost towns, Bodie is maintained in a state of “arrested decay.” One could argue that decay set in almost from the start.

Fort Griffin, Texas

Many of the wilder Western towns earned their own catchy epithets. Fort Griffin’s was “Babylon on the Brazos.” Down its street walked a who’s-who of pistoleros, including John Wesley Hardin, Wyatt Earp and Pat Garrett. And it was here prostitute Mary Katherine Horony (aka “Big Nose Kate”) began her tempestuous, on-again, off-again relationship with dentist turned gambler/gunman John Henry “Doc” Holliday.



BELOW: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; TOP: BODIE STATE HISTORICAL PARK

Fort Griffin was established as a military outpost in 1867 and became a jumping-off place for buffalo hunters. Soon a rough-and-tumble settlement took root at the foot of the hill on which the fort stood. Known alternately as “Hidetown,” “The Flat” or “The Bottom,” it attracted every form of lowlife on the frontier. By 1874 things had grown so out of hand that the Army placed Fort Griffin under martial law and banished several of its rowdier residents.

Two years later, with lawlessness once more on the rise, the settlement hired a local vigilante named John Larn to keep the peace. It soon came to light, however, that Larn and Deputy John Selman had abused their office to start their own rustling ring. Justice was swift. Soon after Larn was jailed, masked vigilantes broke in and shot him to doll rags. Selman fled, earning notoriety two decades later as the man who shot gunman Hardin in the back of the head.

Time ultimately tamed the outpost, once hunters had slaughtered the buffalo to near extinction, and the Army had bottled up hostile Kiowas and Comanches on reservations. When the railroad bypassed town, the death knell sounded irrevocably for the Babylon on the Brazos.

While Fort Griffin is no more, a handful of original and reconstructed buildings stand in mute testimony to its rowdy past within a 506-acre park administered by the Texas Historical Commission.



Cromwell, Oklahoma

While the discovery of precious ore and the cattle business gave rise to towns across the West through the turn of the 20th century, the wild and short-lived boomtown dubbed “Cromwell the Wicked” sprang up during the Roaring Twenties on the discovery of oil. Platted soon after the first gushers came in, Cromwell boasted a population of thousands within weeks. According to the Oklahoma Historical Society, in the absence of law enforcement some 150 establishments sold illegal alcohol and drugs. For a small fee local doctors would

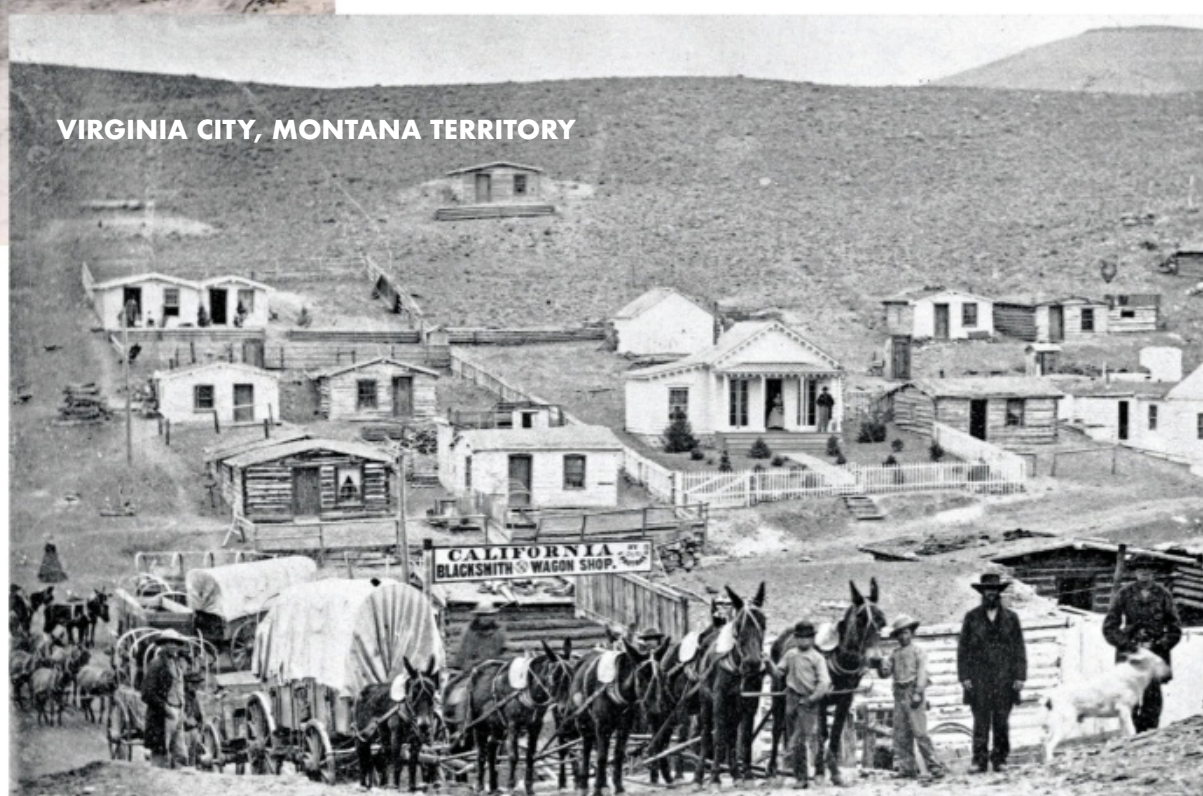
even “prescribe” whiskey to “patients,” thereby making its sale legal. As in the earlier wide-open Western towns, prostitution flourished, with brothels springing up along the crowded main street. The opening of a post office in 1924 did little to civilize the town.

In desperation Cromwell’s more responsible citizens called on the services of 70-year-old retired lawman Bill Tilghman, proffering him a marshal’s badge and a respectable salary to root out the drug trade and investigate suspected corruption on the part of federal prohibition agent Wiley Lynn. While confronting the drunken agent on the streets of Cromwell on Nov. 21, 1924, Tilghman was shot and killed. Although Lynn was acquitted, some chroniclers insist he was in the pay of a local crime boss, and Tilghman had been the victim of a nefarious plot. Still others claim the marshal himself had been “on the take” and had begun to carve for himself a portion of the town’s illicit revenues.

A month after Tilghman’s death a fire razed the town’s business district, consuming all the saloons, brothels and pool halls in what was almost certainly an act of retribution by the legendary lawman’s friends. There was no investigation. A concurrent decline in the oil boom marked an end to Cromwell’s wild days, and the population dwindled to only a few hundred, where it has remained. Today a marble marker in the city park commemorates Bill Tilghman.

Virginia City, Bannack, Hell Gate and Helena, Montana Territory

The lure of gold and silver gave license to the West’s rowdier elements. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Montana Territory towns of





Bannack, Virginia City (in Alder Gulch), the aptly named Hell Gate (5 miles west of present-day Missoula) and Helena (in Last Chance Gulch). Each boasted its fair share of outlawry and deaths from “lead poisoning.” That said, in the absence of legitimate law enforcement what made the region unique—and added terror to the equation in yet another form—was the establishment of a large vigilante faction that tended to swiftly resolve infractions, real or assumed, with a length of rope and a short drop.

Doubtless, many of the lynchings were justified, while others remain controversial. In early 1864, for example, Bannack vigilantes summarily hanged Sheriff Henry Plummer and two of his deputies. For a century and a half Plummer has been vilified as a heartless man-killer and mastermind of a sophisticated criminal network. Yet a 1993 article in this magazine argued that the sheriff was innocent and that the crime ring he was accused of leading never existed. Plummer’s only offense, according to the authors, was in publicly stating his intention of putting a stop to the lynchings.

Among those given a “suspended” sentence by vigilantes was Joseph Alfred “Jack” Slade. Slade had established an early reputation as a no-nonsense manager for Ben Holladay’s Overland Stage line, killing without hesitation when the situation demanded. Rumor had it he used one malefactor’s shriveled ear as a watch fob. Unfortunately, “Slade of the Overland,” as he was known, became a

raging alcoholic, terrorizing the residents of Virginia City when in his cups. Despite repeated warnings he continued to allow liquor to drive his actions. Finally, in March 1864 vigilantes hanged him for disturbing the peace—an ignominious death for a living legend.

Between 1864 and ’70 Montana Territory recorded 57 lynchings. These included five in Hell Gate, six in Bannack, 10 in Virginia City and 11 in Helena. Over time increasingly negative public reaction—and the introduction of a less arbitrary system of law enforcement—brought the extralegal hangings to an end, although some Montanans still sing the praises of the vigilantes in what was largely a lawless land. Today Hell Gate is no more, Bannack is a well-preserved ghost town and touristy Virginia City retains much of its period charm. Helena is the state capital.



Las Vegas, New Mexico Territory

That *other* Las Vegas saw more than its share of violence and crime in the 1870s, much of it conducted by a syndicate of gunfighters and gamblers known as the Dodge City Gang. Ironically, most of its members at one time or another wore a badge. The gang included such notorious badmen as “Mysterious Dave” Mather, “Dirty Dave” Rudabaugh, “Dutch Henry” Borne, “Hoodoo” Brown, J.J. Webb and Tom Pickett. Its members killed and robbed with impunity both in and around Las Vegas. Territorial Governor Miguel Otero labeled them “as tough a bunch of badmen as ever gathered outside a penal institution.” So prevalent was their horse stealing that a purloined animal was commonly referred to as a “Dutch Henry.”

By the late 1880s cattle rustling had also become epidemic in the area. Saloon owner Vicente Silva and his gang of “White Caps” stole entire herds, until Silva was murdered—presumably by his own men—and the thievery gradually petered out. By the close of the century Las Vegas had quieted down considerably. In 1898, when Theodore Roosevelt called for volunteers to fill the ranks of his soon-to-be celebrated Rough Riders regiment, 21 Las Vegasians stepped forward.

Today the tamed town of 13,000 is home to numerous art galleries and offers walking tours through its historic district. Dutch Henry would hardly recognize the place.

Newton, Kansas

While such Kansas cow towns as Dodge City and Abilene receive most of the writers’ ink these days, little Newton was every bit as wild as—and in one

notorious instance considerably wilder than—the others. For only one brief season Newton served as railhead for the vast herds of Texas cattle. Here the excitement-starved Texans found amusement in a fast-growing number of saloons and brothels. “The new town was notoriously rowdy,” the Harvey County Historical Museum affirms. “Hide Park, located south of the railroad tracks and west of Main Street, was so named because the ‘girls showed so much of their hide.’...With no true police force yet in Newton, violence and shootings were not uncommon.”

No one, however, was prepared for the wholesale slaughter that erupted on Aug. 20, 1871. Nine days earlier what had begun as political banter and a fistfight between local lawmen Mike McCluskie and Billy Bailey ended when the former shot and mortally wounded the latter. On the 20th four Texas cowboys—friends of the late Bailey—found McCluskie in Tuttle’s Dance Hall. One immediately drew and emptied his gun into McCluskie, killing him, while the other three fired into the air to cow bystanders.

Moments later James Riley, a devoted friend of McCluskie’s, drew his pistols and leveled the playing field. By the time the dust settled, four more men lay dead, three wounded. Riley then strolled out of the saloon and into obscurity, having set a record for a single act of violence few cow towns could equal.

Lincoln, New Mexico Territory

“Wild” doesn’t begin to describe 1870s Lincoln. Any community that can boast a bona fide war, and against whom martial law was declared, deserves special mention in our compendium. President Rutherford B. Hayes himself described its main thoroughfare as “the most dangerous street in America,” and with good reason.

Lincoln is best known as the setting of a years-long conflict between two murderous factions, each of which was seeking

PICK YOUR POISON

Our list of tough towns is by no means definitive, as fans of Tombstone, Deadwood and Dodge City will no doubt agree. You likely have your own favorite “Sodoms” with a tradition of blood and mayhem. Shoot us an email at wildwest@historynet.com with what you consider the roughest town in the Wild West era (please include your name and hometown). We’ll share some of your thoughts with fellow readers in future Letters sections.

the commercial advantage in the region. Still, the number of killings within Lincoln County’s borders is staggering. In one decade alone some 50 people—49 men and one woman—died violently. Several died at the end of a rope, legally or otherwise. One grim morning a man was hanged twice, the first attempt having failed to finish the job.

In the end former territorial governor Lew Wallace wrote the best-selling novel *Ben Hur*, and Henry McCarty (aka “Billy the Kid”) gained arguably undeserved immortality. But as dozens of gun-wielding badmen belatedly discovered during Lincoln’s wilder days, there was neither glory nor romance in a violent death. With rare exception the victims were forgotten with the last shovelful of earth tossed atop their graves. [www](http://www.historynet.com)

New York-based freelance writer Ron Soodalter is a frequent contributor to Wild West and other HistoryNet publications. For further reading he recommends Great Gunfighters of the Kansas Cownowns, 1867–1886, by Nyle H. Miller and Joseph W. Snell; The Lincoln County War: A Documentary History, by Frederick Nolan; Death of a Gunfighter: The Quest for Jack Slade, the West’s Most Elusive Legend, by Dan Rottenberg; and Outlaw Tales of Nevada: True Stories of the Silver State’s Most Infamous Crooks, Culprits and Cutthroats, by Charles L. Convis.

LINCOLN, NEW MEXICO TERRITORY



Street scene
Lincoln

MURDER MOST FOWL

A 1904 Humane Society raid
on an illegal Los Angeles cockfight
proved deadly for one defiant spectator

By Matthew Bernstein



Fighting Gamecocks
The Cockfight, 1889, an oil
by Rémy Cogghe, captures
the enthusiasm betting men
have for the bloody bouts.

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In April 1904 Los Angeles Humane Society chief officer Nathan W. Zimmer received a tip that a gambling ring was set to stage an illegal cockfight at Hunter's Ranch, a few miles north of town along the east bank of the Los Angeles River. Zimmer hatched a plan to catch the lawbreakers in a sting. The operation would take cunning, precision and manpower. Among those he tapped for help was special officer Charles M. Carpenter, a middle-aged man of property whose zeal for protecting animals had led him more than 1,000 miles south from Wilbur, Wash., to work for the Humane Society. Carpenter's primary duty was to destroy suffering animals—a harrowing task. Zimmer determined it was time his special officer got some experience in the field. The decision would have lethal consequences.



CHARLES M. CARPENTER

On the morning of May 1 Christian David Frey, a prosperous 32-year-old butcher, kissed wife Margaret goodbye and left their Los Angeles home in a horse and buggy, his three hunting hounds trailing alongside, ostensibly for exercise. His actual destination was Hunter's Ranch. The arid Santa Ana winds marred what would otherwise have been a beautiful Sunday, but Frey remained undeterred. He'd be there if it killed him.

Outside one of his two butcher shops Frey picked up fellow cockfighting aficionado William C. Walsh, a 21-year-old house painter by trade. As Walsh stepped into the buggy, he tucked a gunnysack behind the seat. Inside was a Red Pyle rooster he'd bred for fighting and hoped to sell at Hunter's Ranch. Taking the San Fernando Road north, Frey and Walsh soon reached the turnoff for the ranch. The side road led into a canyon between a high bluff and the river, on the opposite bank and within a couple miles of where construction crews would raise Dodger Stadium 58 years later. At 10 minutes past noon Frey tied up the buggy and his hounds amid a copse of trees 75 feet from the cockfighting ring—a 20-foot-wide pit ringed by a 3-foot-high canvas partition. There the pair joined a gathering crowd of more than 100 people.

Despite the wind, everyone seemed to be enjoying the Sabbath. Teamster Eugene A. Phipps sold sandwiches and soda water out of his wagon. Frey and Walsh broke out bottles of beer. Thomas Ratigan, a local peddler, was sent out for a keg. To the accompaniment of crowing from the coops, the crowd around the pit cheered on the gamecocks.

The blood sport known as cockfighting was violent enough, oftentimes resulting in the maiming or death of one if not both of the roosters. To spice things up, however, the Angelenos snipped off the roosters' sharp leg spurs—used to protect themselves and their hens from predators—and replaced them with strap-on metal

gaffs. These 1¼-inch razor-sharp blades dramatically intensified the carnage, resulting in bloodier, more entertaining spectacles.

Frey settled in to watch the colorful fighting birds slash each other to rags.

Though California authorities frowned on the practice, cockfights were legal in the bordering states of Arizona, Nevada and Oregon at the turn of the 20th century. In Mexico they remain legal and are as popular in some communities as a *quinceañera* (celebration of a girl's 15th birthday) or even *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead). Pressed by the Humane Society in 1901, California legislators made it a misdemeanor to even attend a cockfight. Though perfectly willing to risk a fine and/or jail time, Frey and the others felt certain the law would not bother them. They placed their confidence in the man who had set up the bouts—Ignacio Bilderrain, among the most resourceful criminals in Los Angeles.

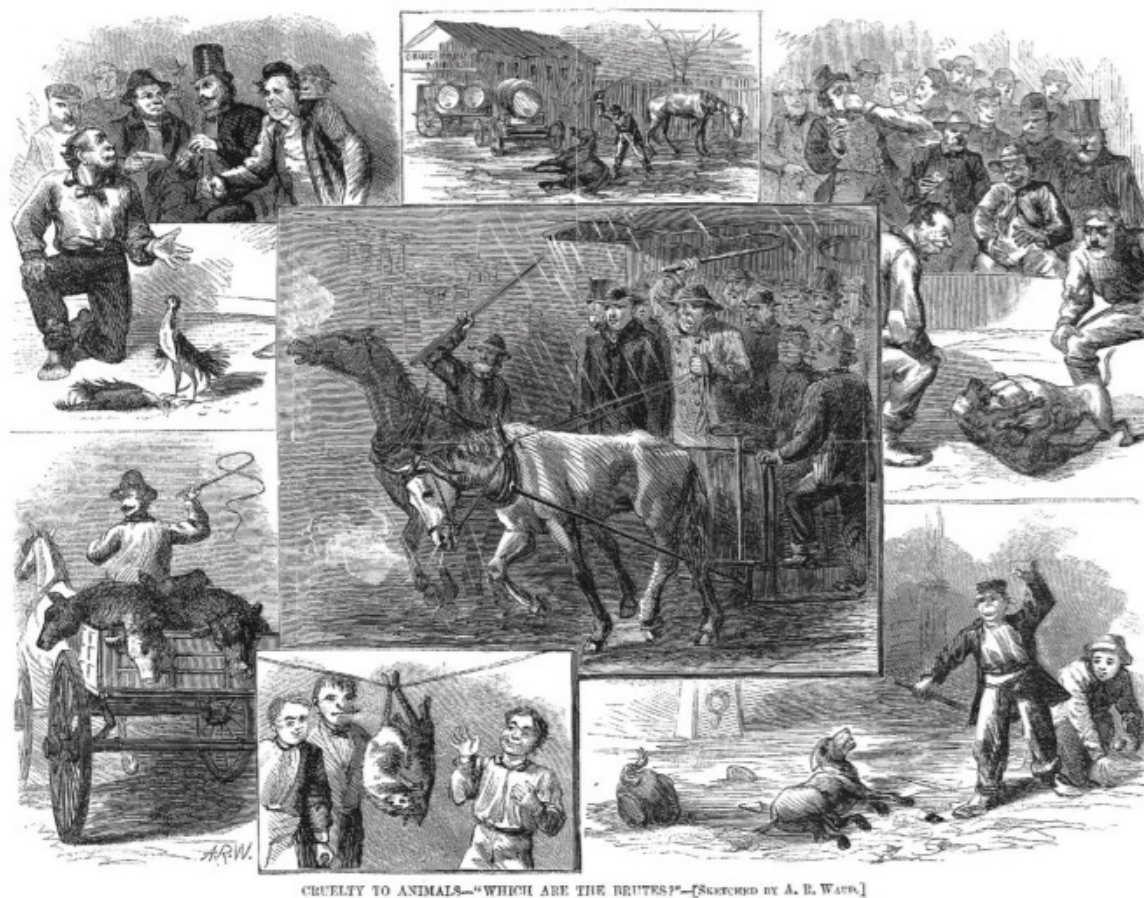
While Bilderrain's brother and a cousin had chosen public service—brother Refugio as a tax assessor, cousin Jesús as a police officer—Ignacio had gone down a different path. A onetime lieutenant of notorious con man E.C. "Poker" Davis, Bilderrain had habitually fleeced well-heeled newcomers with the aid of fellow bunco artists. Quick to fight, he once beat a man with a cane during a political dispute on the corner of Spring and Temple streets before a crowd of some 200 people. Though arrested multiple times, he'd always managed to beat the rap.



CHRISTIAN FREY

In March 1900 Bilderrain strode boldly into the office of Humane Society officer William B. Craig and offered him \$20 to turn a blind eye to a cockfight he was organizing. Unknown to Ignacio, Los Angeles Police Chief Charles Elton was listening from concealment in a closet. After Craig took the money, Elton revealed himself and arrested Bilderrain for bribery. At the outset of his January 1901 trial the defense lawyers raised thorny questions. May police officers entrap citizens into committing a crime? Do officers of the Humane Society even have the same legal standing as police officers? The jury thought so and found Ignacio guilty. But Judge Benjamin N. Smith kept his own counsel, and on January 23 he cut Bilderrain loose. In his opinion Smith argued that Craig was not a legally appointed officer of the state. The insinuation was that Humane Society officers—and by extension the causes they championed—should not be accorded the same legitimacy as police officers.

A dangerous precedent was thus set. Bilderrain in turn felt free to provide fans of the blood sport with ever more cockfights. By 1904 he held the clandestine gatherings almost every Sunday. The price of admission was \$1.



Animals Were Harmed

This 19th-century American newspaper engraving depicts the various ways people mistreated animals, including the sport of cockfighting, at top left. The illegal cockfight near Los Angeles in April 1904 also led to a fatality among the spectators present.

blood dripping from his mouth, Ratigan halted the wounded man's horse and asked what had happened. Frey managed only to mumble he'd been shot. Resolving to get the wounded man to a doctor, Ratigan and Hunter jumped into the buggy. Hunter started the horse on a run, while Ratigan supported Frey to keep him from falling. Some 20 minutes later, as the buggy crossed the bridge over the Arroyo Seco on Avenue 20, Frey took his last bloody breath. Ratigan and Hunter drove to the East Los Angeles Police Station with his body. (Authorities released the corpse to Johann G. Frey, brother of the deceased, who later surrendered it for a coroner's inquest.)

Meanwhile, back at Hunter's Ranch the officers had taken several men into custody. Phipps, Gerke and Linson, among others, were charged with misdemeanors and fined between \$25 and \$30. Bilderrain and others were wanted for questioning. The

At 2 p.m. on May 1, 1904, lookout Homer L. Michelson was eating a sandwich in a copse of willows on the bluff overlooking the riverside cockfight. Below him a pair of bartender Irvin Linson's gamecocks battled. But it was the action unfolding in front of him that drew Michelson's attention, as two men approached in a buggy. One he recognized as a Humane Society officer. Discarding his sandwich, Michelson drew his pistol, aimed skyward and fired twice.

At the reports Bilderrain shouted, "Screw out, boys!"

Linson's birds continued to fight as men bolted in all directions, deserting coats, hats and neckties. Frey ran to the trees and fumbled to free his dogs' leads and the rein binding his buggy horse to the trees. Phipps ducked into the brush. Bilderrain vanished. Amid the melee only saloonkeeper Henry Gerke and 15-year-old son Herman stayed put, placidly eating lunch in their buggy.

Into view marched the Humane Society officers Michelson had spotted arriving in the buggy—Carpenter and another man. Meanwhile, Zimmer and three other spectators revealed themselves to be undercover officers. As the gamblers flew the coop, Zimmer hollered out, "Stop, you are all under arrest!"

Of the six officers, Carpenter—likely incensed by the sight of the dead and mutilated birds—proved the most aggressive. As Phipps sought to slink back to his wagon, Carpenter promptly arrested him. When Henry Gerke mouthed off from his perch in the buggy, the infuriated officer snatched away the saloonkeeper's lunch, tossed it to the ground and pistol-whipped him across the face, to the horror of Gerke's son, Herman.

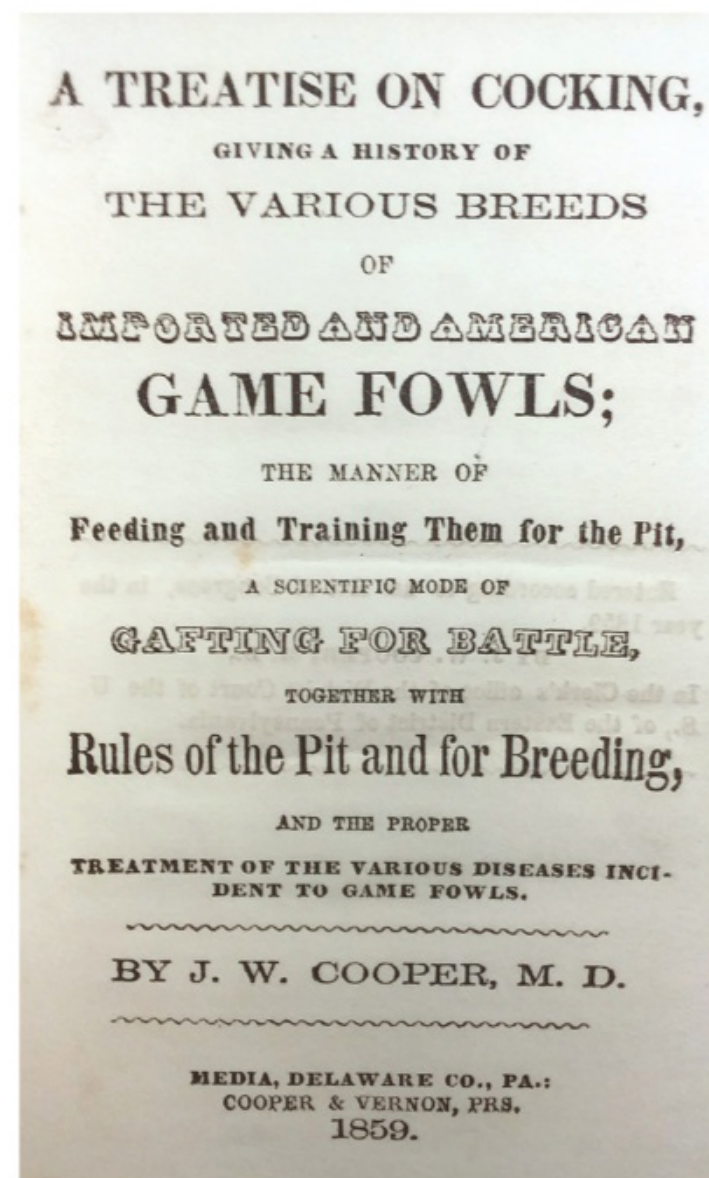
Carpenter had a tougher time with Frey. The officer reached him just as the butcher freed his horse's reins.

"Stop!" Carpenter ordered. "You are under arrest!"

"You cannot arrest me," Frey snapped, and in a flash he punched Carpenter in the face, jumped into his buggy and started to drive off.

Carpenter wasn't having it. Seeing red, he drew his revolver and fired. The bullet passed through the back of the buggy and ricocheted downward just as Frey leaned forward to grab his whip. The slug struck him a few inches below his right shoulder blade, passed through his right lung, severing the pulmonary artery, and lodged in his breast. Despite being grievously wounded, Frey whipped his horse and drove out of sight.

He regained the San Fernando Road as Ratigan was returning with Thomas Hunter and the keg of beer. Spying Frey hanging halfway out his buggy with



Cockfighting 101

Dr. J.W. Cooper added legitimacy to the brutal sport with his 1859 treatise on how to handle the fowls.

Humane Society was given custody of the captured birds. But the officers could hardly crow victory, for one of their own, Carpenter, had gunned down an unarmed man. Frey wasn't alive to testify, but several witnesses confirmed Carpenter had fired the fatal shot. Defense attorneys suggested an errant warning shot from a lookout may have killed Frey, but few familiar with the case believed that would fly.

On May 3 the county coroner held an inquest, and Bilderrain was compelled to testify. Asked his occupation, the disgruntled gambler replied, "I haven't any." He dodged as many of the subsequent questions as he could, including what he'd seen unfold at Hunter's Ranch. As to whether he'd come to see a cockfight, he admitted with a smirk, "Well, I just went out there, and I thought if there should happen to be a cockfight, I might see it."

The coroner released the results of his inquest that same day. Although Frey had been killed "while resisting arrest for a misdemeanor offense," Carpenter had indeed fired the fatal shot. As police escorted the Humane Society officer from the inquest, a knot of Frey's friends crowded around them. "Lynch the — paleface! Lynch the — — !" they yelled.

Flanked by the patrolmen, Carpenter appeared unperturbed. But a more severe trial lay ahead for him. Charged with manslaughter on May 11, the accused was released on \$5,000 bail.

Nearly eight months later, on Jan. 3, 1905, Charles Carpenter stood trial for killing Christian Frey. Defending the accused were Earl Rogers and Luther Brown. Though capable attorneys, neither



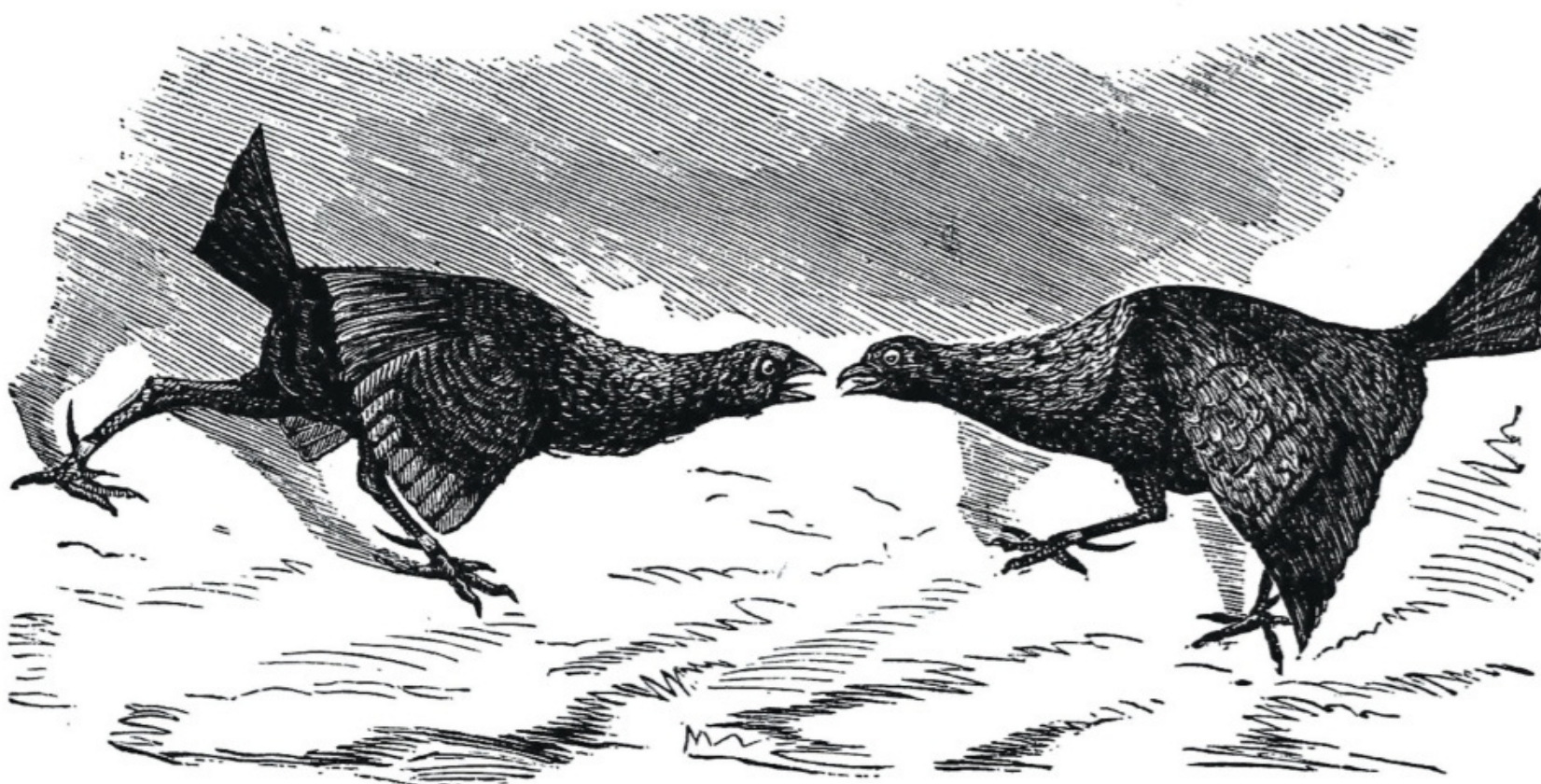
held a candle to Henry T. Gage, a member of the three-man prosecution team, who had a bone to pick with the Humane Society.

Born on Christmas Day 1852 in Geneva, N.Y., Gage had moved to Los Angeles in 1874, initially working as a sheep dealer. In 1877 he turned to the law, attracting the Southern Pacific Railroad as a client. He also dabbled in gold, ultimately gaining control of the Puritan, New York and Red Rover mines, the latter one of the most profitable goldfields in the Los Angeles area. His star was on the rise. By 1891 Gage's courtroom success was so pronounced that President Benjamin Harrison appointed him a federal prosecutor. Eight years later he'd reach the pinnacle of his career when inaugurated as California's 20th governor.

Governor Gage's tenure in office was rocky, punctuated by suspicions he was merely a pawn for the Southern Pacific and his own calamitous denial of a bubonic plague outbreak in San Francisco. Weeks into office he vetoed a funding bill on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, writing, "I am heartily in favor of proper measures for the protection of all animals against cruelty, but such a measure as this proposed cannot,

L.A. Lawless

Cockfighting in California was illegal in 1904 and remained so two decades later when this photo was taken. Below: The birds battled beak to beak.



C. David Frey Shot While Trying to Escape—Sensational Descent Upon Big Gang of Local Sports—Well-known Citizens Summoned Into Court.

WHILE attempting to escape arrest, C. David Frey, a well-to-do meat dealer who resides at No. 270 East Main street, was shot and killed yesterday afternoon two miles south of Tropico by C. F. Carpenter, an officer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The killing was the result of a raid by six officers upon a cocking main, which was attended by more than one hundred men, some of them citizens of prominence, but more of them gamblers, bartenders, bunco-men and grafters.

Carpenter was shot while in his buggy driving away from the scene. The bullet passed through the back of the buggy seat, entered the man's back to the left of the spinal column, passed through the left lung and the lower portion of the heart and lodged under the skin of the left breast, causing a wound from which death resulted in less than twenty minutes.

When Carpenter was taken into custody, as soon after the shooting as the police could reach the scene, he admitted that he had fired the fatal shot and told some of the particulars. When he reached police headquarters, however, he positively refused to make any

tracks and the Los Angeles River. A short distance south of the Sentosa slaughter-house on the San Fernando road. It is about two miles below Tropic, and only a short distance beyond the northern city boundary. There cooking mains have been held almost every Sunday for months, the fact being no secret. It is not difficult to ascertain who managed these feasts.

Ygnacio Belderrain, formerly a member of the "Black Legion," a gang of the "black" underworld, a leader in the fraternity of "maas" and a known gangster, was one of the speakers. His speech had been one of the most brilliant. There had been a number of speakers, many of men of prominence, and so long had they been speaking that the audience had become bored. The maas seemed to have secured immunity from arrest. The officers of the Society for the Prevention of Crime were, however, not watching the place for a long time. It is no easy matter to get into the place, and it is not so easy to get out. The maas were held in the open air, and the officers were posted on all roads; the officers who caught the maas were not to be taken into custody, and the officers who would be likely to try to make the maas known to the men violating the laws are known to the men violating the laws.

N. W. Zimmer is the leading officer in the employ of the society, and he is one of those who had been attending the cocking mains on different occa-

turning to Carpenter, who was still running after him, laughed and shouted:
"Shoot, shoot, I dare you to shoot, you _____"

THE FATAL SHOT.
Smarting under the blow he had received, and taunted by the epithet which Frey applied to him, Carpenter raised his revolver and fired one shot. As he did so Frey was seen to duck his head, and immediately, the horse, frightened by the shot, started to run. At that time Carpenter did not know that his shot had taken effect, at least



The portrait in the upper right hand corner is that of G. David Frey, the victim. In the lower left hand corner is the picture of Humane Officer Carpenter. In the center appears the buggy in which Frey was shot.

he so stated later, but he was almost certain he had not missed his man, such is his prowess with firearms. He at once turned his attention to assisting the other officers, and said nothing to them about having shot a man.

Among those who were enroute to the scene at the time the raid began was R. A. Radigan and a Mexican. They had sent out a keg of beer and were following the wagon containing it. They were perhaps 300 yards away from the place when the signal was fired. A few minutes later the

From the outset of Carpenter's January 1905 trial Gage's strategy was manifest. His first task was to disprove the defense assertion the officer had not, in fact, killed Frey. Testifying for the prosecution, young Herman Gerke testified the officer had not only fired the shot but also paused to steady his aim. Carpenter then took the stand.

“Are you not a good shot?” Gage questioned.

Pressing his advantage, Gage worked to both undermine the criminalization of cockfighting and besmirch the Humane Society. In this respect, the prosecutor employed the same tactics Judge Smith had cemented in his decision to overturn the guilty verdict in the Bilderrain bribery case. Arguing that cockfighting wasn't an actual crime, Gage reflected on founding father George Washington, whom he called "an adept cockfighter in the wilds of old Virginia." Questioning the Humane Society's very legitimacy, Gage insinuated the distribution of its fines "comes very near being a graft."

Pecked out in Print

Left: *The Los Angeles Times* story on the raid gone foul included a depiction of the buggy in which Frey was shot and images of both him and Carpenter. Below: Betters and voyeurs have this 1871 cockfight in New Orleans well covered.

In his closing argument on January 10 Gage paced the courtroom before Judge Smith and the jury box, thundering and pontificating for five solid hours. The jury seemingly appreciated his performance. After deliberating, they found Carpenter guilty of invol-



untary manslaughter. Judge Smith sentenced Carpenter to five years in prison. The Los Angeles Superior Court later awarded widow Margaret Frey \$3,000 in compensatory damages (her attorneys had sought \$50,000).

Outside the courtroom Zimmer struck back at Gage's assertion of graft. "For 11 months I gave my services free of all charge to the society," the chief officer told the *Los Angeles Herald*. "I also gave them my office and my horse and wagon with which to answer complaints....My salary is \$25 a month less than my actual expenses."

HISTORY OF THE COCKFIGHT

Cockfighting originated in the ancient Eastern world, spread to the Mediterranean by the 5th century BC and had already reached Britain by the time of Roman consul Julius Caesar's 1st century BC invasion. "Fowls were there in abundance," he wrote, "but only used for the purpose of amusement and pastime." The blood sport was characterized by voyeuristic, gladiatorial elements, and as it spread to the New World, it allowed people of different cultures to vicariously battle through champions as diverse as themselves. The Tartar breeds, for example, sprang up in the Virginias from a 6½-pound dark red cock known for its savagery. Gray-feathered Strychnines originated in Mexico. The Prince Charles breed was the product of a reddish brown English rooster and a blue American hen. Wild Indians, White Hackles and Red Pyles were also very popular.

Among the most prominent of passionate cockfighters was Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna, who hosted grand matches and spent a small fortune on prize roosters. In his popular 1976 novel *Roots* author Alex Haley has the character "Chicken George" reflect on Santa Anna's boast to be the world's greatest cockfighter—though George doubted it, having never heard of the villain of the Alamo. Haley's own fascination with cockfighting, as expressed vicariously in the novel, allowed Americans to view such contests with curiosity rather than horror. Indeed, George's first experience at a cockfight spoke to a common experience:

At "Pit your cocks!" the two birds smashed head-on, taking to the air, they dropped back to the floor, furiously pecking, feinting, their snakelike necks maneuvering, seeking any opening. Again bursting upward, they beat at each other with their wings—and then they fell with Massa Lea's bird reeling, obviously gaffed! But within seconds, in the next aerial flurry, the massa's bird fatally sank its own gaff.

While Zimmer may have been in the right regarding allegations of graft in the Los Angeles Humane Society, the fact remained one of his own special officers was bound for San Quentin State Prison. Carpenter wouldn't be eligible for parole until Dec 8, 1907. In the meantime, he would regard life from inside a cage. **WW**

A frequent contributor to Wild West, Matthew Bernstein teaches writing at Matrix for Success Academy and Los Angeles City College. For further reading he recommends Game Fowls, by John W. Cooper, and The Gospel of Kindness: Animal Welfare and the Making of Modern America, by Janet M. Davis.



Dutch Treat

In 1670 painter Jan Steen captured *A Cock Fight*—by then a centuries-old pastime.

The chapter ends on a high note: "[George] was sad, exultant, frightened; he had never been so excited. And

on that crisp morning a new gamecocker had been born."

Haley's enthusiasm for the sport, however, did nothing to sway American legislators. By 1976 cockfighting in the United States remained legal only in Arizona, Florida, Oklahoma and Louisiana. In 2007 Louisiana became the last state to outlaw cockfighting. Of course, there have always been gamblers willing to flout the law.

The largest cockfighting raid in North American history (code-named "Operation Angry Birds"), which snared more than 7,000 cooped roosters, came on May 15, 2017, in Val Verde, Calif.—just 40 miles north of Hunter's Ranch, where on May 1, 1904, Humane Society special officer Charles Carpenter shot Christian Frey as the latter fled Ignacio Bilderrain's cockfight. Although the events that Sunday in Los Angeles proved fatal to Frey and disastrous to Carpenter, it was the fighting birds that truly suffered—and do to this day. Despite the best efforts of law enforcement and the Humane Society, they are forced to fight to the death for the amusement of voyeurs, the thrill of gamblers and the enrichment of bookies. —M.B.

They Hang Horse Thieves, Don't They?

In Dakota Territory, a remote area with a sparse population, they certainly did, as depicted in this 19th-century engraving.



DEADLY HORSEPLAY IN THE DAKOTAS

Those who stole other people's ponies in that vast, remote region faced outraged citizens intent on getting rid of them—one way or another

By Aaron Woodard



Horse theft in the Old West often inconvenienced a victim far more than the present-day crime of car theft, as much of the region remained unsettled, and great distances separated population centers. A man without a horse might face a slow death, especially if caught out in arid country or the dead of winter. The consequences for a horse thief were also far more dire. While car theft might land one in jail today, getting caught with a stolen horse on the frontier could prove fatal.

Although popular Western films and TV shows tend to play up cattle rustling as the worst of all frontier crimes, real Westerners considered horse theft a far more grievous offense. It was largely

a matter of geography. By the mid-19th century laws back in the crowded Eastern cities tended to treat horse theft as a simple misdemeanor, punishable by a fine. Western communities deemed it a capital offense, often meted out on an extralegal basis—usually, though not always, at the end of a rope.

Law enforcement in general was a difficult proposition in the sparsely populated expanses of the American West. Dakota Territory is a textbook case. By the mid-1870s crime was on the rise in that remote region. Things got so bad that in April 1877 territorial Supreme Court Chief Justice Peter C. Shannon—the man who three months earlier had sentenced Wild Bill

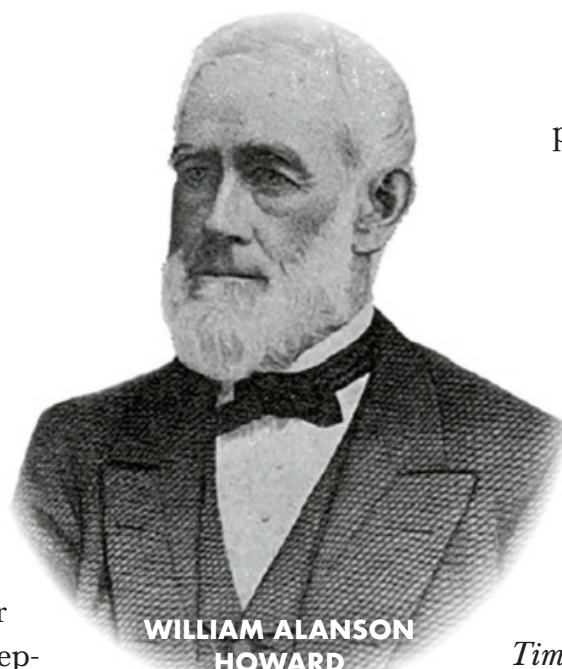
Hickok's killer, Jack McCall, to hang—had his own horse stolen from a stable in Yankton, the capital city. The judge advertised for its return, but whether it was recovered is unknown. The thief, Frank McMahon, was captured that fall, convicted and sent to prison. Two years later territorial Governor William Alanson Howard addressed a joint session of the Legislature, urging members to authorize the construction of a prison or prisons. "One of the most important subjects that should, I think, demand your early attention is the mode and expense of keeping our convicts," he said. "The number is increasing, and with our largely increasing population it will continue to increase."

Although horse theft occurred in every Western state and territory, perhaps no place was more inviting for thieves than the wide-open rangeland of Dakota Territory (from which the states of North and South Dakota would emerge in November 1889). Distances between most settlements was great, and the population was small and scattered. There were few natural barriers to impede travel—certainly no soaring mountain ranges as in Wyoming and Montana territories. What the Dakotas did have, particularly in the southeastern corner, were creeks and lakes ideal for watering livestock, as well as ravines and hidden gullies in which to conceal corrals and stockades.

Among the more notorious purveyors of purloined equines, according to *Outlaw Dakota* author Wayne Fanebust, was Ed DeWitt, a Texan who turned up one day in 1874 near Springfield, Dakota Territory. Reportedly handsome, he cut a dashing figure in the isolated community—but beneath his sheep's clothing lurked a wolf.

Caught red-handed on several early occasions, smooth-talking DeWitt claimed to have been loaned the horse or team in question. When the owners begged to differ, the local paper branded the Texas transplant a horse thief. Drifting in and out of territory, DeWitt continued his wayward ways, eventually facing a charge of larceny and winding up behind bars in Yankton. Bonded out but far from repentant, he reportedly stole and sold another horse to pay his attorney fees.

Arrested multiple times, DeWitt proved a troublesome inmate who repeatedly escaped from jail. The June 15, 1875, edition of the Yankton *Daily Press and Dakotian* recounted his last series of breakouts, at the outset of which he injured himself by stepping on a nail. Forging ahead, mostly on all fours, to the James River, DeWitt stole a boat and drifted south toward the Missouri River junction. Alert citizens soon recognized the well-known thief, chased him down and turned him over to the law. Authorities returned the escapee to jail, but he didn't stay long. DeWitt made another escape, his last, and was neither seen nor heard from again. It was a rare thing indeed for a repeat offender,



WILLIAM ALANSON HOWARD

particularly a horse thief, to evade the law or the lynch mob.

The rolling hills around present-day Wessington Springs, S.D., proved a suitable hideout for gangs specializing in horse theft in the 1870s. The worst of the bunch was the Firesteel Gang, which took its name from a local creek. Firesteel was also the name of a township that sprang up near the creek.

According to the March 12, 1874, *Springfield Times*, Starr Platt and John Hain headed up the gang. The latter was a bit of a contradiction, as he was a man of some prominence in the community, having served as a county commissioner. Once suspicion fell on him, however, Hain found he was no longer welcome in Firesteel. He moved up into the Wessington Hills, where he built a small home and seemed to have all the necessities of life, despite not lifting a finger to raise crops or livestock. His new neighbors grew suspicious, and Hain's reputation as a horse thief soon dogged him.

Platt also possessed the trappings of a respectable citizen. According to the Sept. 3, 1879, *Dakota Pantagraph*, he was the first justice of the peace in Hanson County, having taken office six years earlier. But he had a darker side. On Sept. 26, 1876, the *Daily Press and Dakotian* reported authorities had recently arrested Platt for cattle theft.

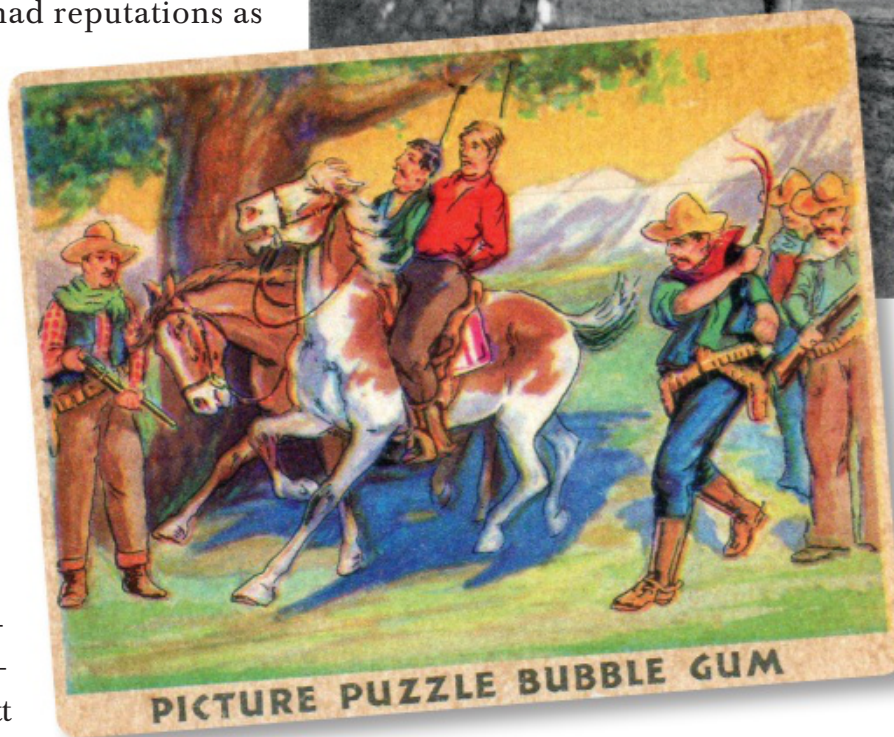
As Fanebust notes in *Outlaw Dakota*, the Firesteel Gang reached the apex of its criminal activity in 1878 as settlers streamed into the territory. Along with their families and belongings the newcomers brought thousands of horses. The gang took notice, intent on making the most of the situation with its fine-tuned operation. They reportedly stole a few head of cattle, but their stock and trade was horse flesh. They sold the stolen mounts to buyers both in and out of the territory, mostly men not overly particular if a horse lacked a clean bill of sale, as long as the price was right. Gang members identified one another by wearing on the lapels of their coats a secret sign—a star, ironically enough.

"A well-organized band of thieves has been operating in this region since early spring," the *Daily Press and Dakotian* reported on July 1. Isolated settlers, said the paper, were alarmed that "their horses or oxen may be coveted by the outlaws." The gang's whereabouts certainly seemed no secret. "These horse thieves have their rendezvous in the Wessington Hills," the paper continued. "There their stolen stock is run and hid up in the timbered gulches until it can be conducted to a place of sale.... Settlers along the Jim [River] have been compelled to contribute more than they could spare to enrich the coffers of this outlaw gang of the Wessington Hills." Inevitably, the irate settlers turned to talk of vigilante justice, and they met "to discuss the efficacy of the preventive qualities of twisted hemp."

INEVITABLY, THE IRATE SETTLERS MET 'TO DISCUSS THE EFFICACY OF THE PREVENTIVE QUALITIES OF TWISTED HEMP'

Even as organized thievery peaked in Dakota Territory in 1878, the forces of law and order (legal and otherwise) were making inroads. Arrests were up across the territory, as were lynchings. That fall, for example, a settler outside the town of Spearfish, far to the west, discovered the bodies of Orbean “Beane” Davis and George Keating dangling from an oak tree, hanged by parties unknown. The September 19 Deadwood *Daily Pioneer* reported the deaths as the likely work of vigilantes, given the pair had reputations as horse thieves.

At one point vigilantes reportedly caught up with Firesteel boss Hain and slipped a noose around his neck. But they didn’t finish the job, as someone arrived in the nick of time with exculpatory evidence. Turns out, on that occasion the horses had wandered off on their own. Hain’s cohort, Starr Pratt, also managed to avoid being lynched and even regained a measure of respectability. On April 9, 1881, Mitchell’s *Western Bugle* identified Platt as proprietor of a livestock operation near Wessington Springs. No mention was made of the origin of his stock.



Lynchings in Lore
Performers in Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West “hang” a horse thief. Left: Vigilantes deliver a double dose of frontier justice in a popular 1933 trading card.

a prominent horse theft ring operating from Nebraska into Dakota Territory. In a subsequent gunfight the detectives killed two thieves and severely wounded gang leader Doc Middleton. Released after a four-year stint in prison, Middleton settled down to married life and even became a lawman. Many weren’t as fortunate. Ephraim “White Stockings” Weatherwax and Cornelius “Lame Johnny” Donahue, among a long list of others, met their fate at the end of a rope.

As lawmen and vigilantes tracked down malefactors in the field, bureaucrats sought to streamline the legalities for punishing horse thieves. The territorial legislature considered measures to expedite the trial and sentencing phases, while Congress approved a bill introduced by Dakota delegate Jefferson Kidder to create a fourth judicial district for Dakota. That added another judge to the mix, thus lightening the caseload for those already on the bench. President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Yankton lawyer and former state representative Gideon Moody to fill the new judicial post. Moody began hearing cases on Sept. 25, 1878.

Respectable citizens in the Wessington Hills also did their part. In 1882 a member of the old Firesteel Gang tipped off settlers to the location of the secret hideout, still in use, though no longer by Hain and Pratt. After obtaining warrants from a justice of the peace, Constable C.W.P. Osgood, Winchester-toting local minister J.G. Campbell and settler William Bateman followed the informant’s directions to a ravine, where they surprised an armed sentry, who surrendered to the Rev. Campbell. Resuming their search, the trio stumbled upon a group of drunken outlaws, who also promptly surrendered. Unfortunately, as the justice of the peace lacked evidence of any specific crime with which to charge the men, he had no choice but to discharge them. Ironically, the only person to spend any significant time in jail was the informant, for providing false information. After all, the law needed to punish someone.



DOC MIDDLETON

Horse theft was an indiscriminate crime. It could happen to the lowliest farmer or the wealthiest of “dude” ranchers. Falling into the latter category was undoubtedly the best-known member of the Eastern social register to live in Dakota Territory, Theodore Roosevelt. In September 1883 the future U.S. president visited the Badlands (of what would become North Dakota) to hunt buffalo, and in short order he purchased the Chimney Butte Ranch (aka Maltese Cross Ranch). He returned in the summer of 1884 and built a second ranch he called the Elkhorn, on the banks of the Little Missouri River 35 miles north of Medora. Horse and cattle thieves plagued the area. In his 1888 memoir *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* Roosevelt chronicled his determination not to take it lying down:

In any wild country where the power of the law is little felt or heeded, and where everyone has to rely upon himself for protection, men soon get to feel that it is in the highest degree unwise to submit to any wrong without making an immediate and resolute effort to avenge it upon the wrongdoers, at no matter what cost of risk or trouble. To submit tamely and meekly to theft, or to any other injury, is to invite almost certain repetition of the offense, in a place where all self-reliant hardihood and the ability to hold one’s own under all circumstances rank as the first of virtues.

Roosevelt soon recorded his first losses. In a Dec. 14, 1884, letter to older sister Anna he mentioned that hired hands Joe Ferris, Bill Sewall and Will Dow had rounded up 52 ponies, only to discover two others had been stolen. Not surprising, as that stark section of the territory had a reputation as a rough neighborhood. “In our own immediate locality we have had more difficulty with white desperadoes than with redskins,” Roosevelt recalled. “At times there has been a good deal of cattle-killing and horse-stealing, and occasionally a murder or two.” The account of a contem-



MARQUIS DE MORÈS

porary echoed the young rancher’s low opinion of Dakota badmen: “[They] were, many of them, outcasts of society, reckless, greedy and conscienceless; fugitives from justice with criminal records; and gunmen who lived by crooked gambling and thievery of every sort.”

The Marquis de Morès, Roosevelt’s friend and sometime rival in Medora, also lost several horses. On Feb. 7, 1884, the editor of the local *Bad Lands Cow Boy* noted, “Several of Marquis’ ponies were stolen from Matthew’s camp a few days ago. Up to last accounts the thieves had not been overtaken, but they probably will be. This is the first horse-stealing case for a long time in the Badlands, and the thieves, if caught, should be so dealt with as to discourage any further pleasantries of this sort.”

From Ranch House to White House

Left: Dakota Territory rancher Theodore Roosevelt poses between hired hands Will Dow (left) and Bill Sewall. Below: Roosevelt’s Elkhorn lay along the Little Missouri River 35 miles north of Medora.



Perhaps it had been the first instance of horse theft in a long time in the Badlands, but the crime was on the upswing, enough so that in 1884 Roosevelt and de Morès, both members of the Little Missouri Stock Growers' Association, advocated a punitive campaign to destroy thieves and rustlers. The following year, after losing six more horses, de Morès went so far as to offer a \$20 per head reward for the return of the horses and a \$500 bounty for the thief or thieves. He also engaged a private detective agency to surveil the range and investigate stock thievery. His actions led to the arrest of five men.

For the average Dakota rancher or farmer who was not a French duke or future American president, horse theft was more than an annoyance—it threatened economic ruin. Banding together with one's neighbors in vigilante posses seemed the best recourse, though it was always possible innocent men could be caught up in a sweep. In his 1888 memoir Roosevelt expressed some misgivings in describing the extralegal means to which his fellow Dakotans sometimes resorted:

During the last two or three years the stockmen have united to put down all these dangerous characters, often by the most summary exercise of lynch law. Notorious bullies and murderers have been taken out and hung, while the bands of horse and cattle thieves have been regularly hunted down and destroyed in pitched fights by parties of armed cowboys; and as a consequence most of our territory is now perfectly law-abiding. One such fight occurred north of me early last spring. The horse thieves were overtaken on the banks of the Missouri; two of their number were slain, and the others were driven on the ice, which broke, and two more were drowned. A few months previously another gang, whose headquarters were near the Canadian line, were surprised in their hut; two or three were shot down by the cowboys as they tried to come out, while the rest barricaded themselves in and fought until the great log hut was set on fire, when they broke forth in a body, and nearly all were killed at once, only one or two making their escape. A little over two years ago



Comes a Horseman

Dakota Territory rancher Charles Henry Holbrook (the author's great-grandfather) sits a horse above and poses beside one of his sons (probably Lon Holbrook) at left.

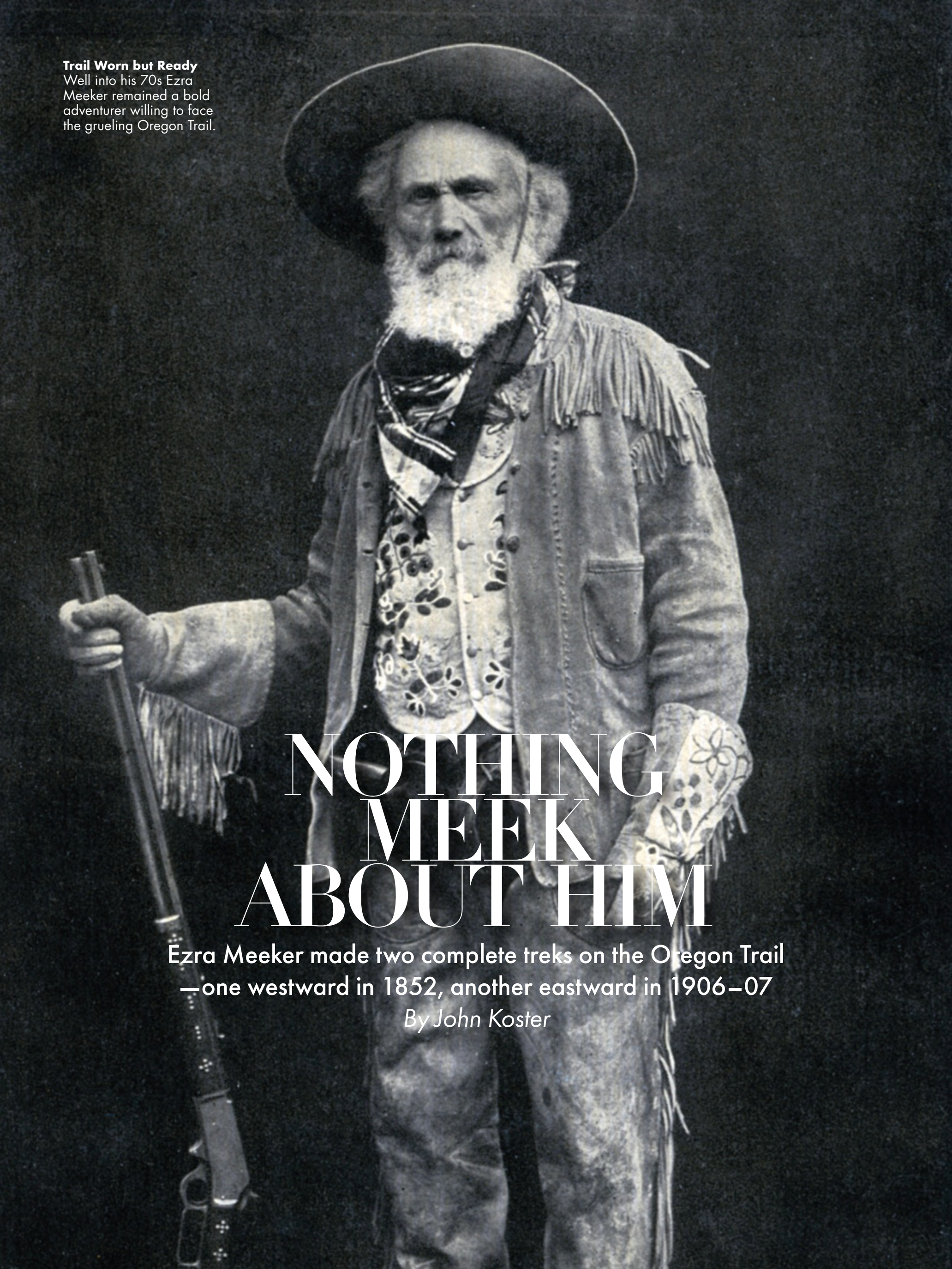
one committee of vigilantes in eastern Montana shot or hung nearly 60—not, however, with the best judgment in all cases....

Be it remarked in passing, that while the outcome of their efforts had been in the main wholesome, yet, as is always the case in an extended raid of vigilantes, several of the 60-odd victims had been perfectly innocent men who had been hung or shot in company with the real scoundrels, either through carelessness and misapprehension or on account of some personal spite.

Although Roosevelt doesn't name him, Montana stockman Granville Stuart (see "The Many Lives of 'Mr. Montana,'" by Ron Soodalter, in the August 2019 *Wild West*) was the leader one such group of vigilantes, dubbed "Stuart's Stranglers," who hunted down horse thieves along the Montana-Dakota border and dealt swift justice. Roosevelt and de Morès had petitioned to join the Stranglers but were turned down (with obvious positive implications for Roosevelt's future political career) because Stuart deemed them too socially prominent for secret societies.

Not until the 1890s was horse theft in decline as an organized criminal activity, thanks in part to the vigilantes, though more so to the ongoing "settling up" of the territory. Not all of the Dakota Territory thieves were hanged or driven out, and some, like Doc Middleton, turned to honest work. One former thief became a railroad conductor. It's not known whether he ever took to robbing trains. **WW**

Aaron Robert Woodard, who teaches for the University of South Dakota, in Sioux Falls, is the author of The Revenger: The Life and Times of Wild Bill Hickok and Soft Fur and Iron Men: A History of the Fur Trade in South Dakota and the Upper Missouri. For further reading he suggests History of Dakota Territory, Vol. II, by George Kingsbury, and Outlaw Dakota: The Murderous Times and Criminal Trials of Frontier Judge Peter C. Shannon, by Wayne Fanebust.



Trail Worn but Ready
Well into his 70s Ezra Meeker remained a bold adventurer willing to face the grueling Oregon Trail.

NOTHING MEEK ABOUT HIM

Ezra Meeker made two complete treks on the Oregon Trail
—one westward in 1852, another eastward in 1906–07

By John Koster

Where He Goes, She Goes
Eliza Jane Sumner married Meeker in 1851 and managed provisioning for their Oregon Trail trek the following year.



The first time Ezra Meeker traveled the Oregon Trail, he was a new husband and father with no other reasonable route by which to reach Oregon by land. The next time he made the journey—backtracking in the era of railroads and early automobile travel—he was an old man, determined to commemorate the history of the emigrant trail. In so doing, he became something of a self-made celebrity.

Meeker was a man stalked by fame, though he also worked at stalking. Born on Dec. 29, 1830, in Butler County, Ohio, he descended from a paternal line that had settled the Hudson River burg of Elizabeth, N.J., and sent a score of its own to fight in the American Revolutionary War. His father, Jacob, was a miller and farmer, and Ezra was the fourth of Jacob and Phoebe Meeker's six children. In 1839 the family moved from Ohio to Indiana, young Ezra walking behind the heavily laden wagon for 200 miles—a preview of his next eight decades. Though an eager learner, the boy disliked sitting still. He soon found work as a printer's apprentice and delivery boy for *The Indianapolis Journal*. Among the subscribers along his route was the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, destined for future fame as an abolitionist.

Phoebe Meeker came from a reasonably well-to-do merchant's family in Cincinnati, and in 1845 her father presented her with \$1,000. The couple used the money to buy a farm, placing teenage Ezra in charge of working the land while Jacob labored at a local mill.

In May 1851 young Ezra married childhood sweetheart Eliza Jane Sumner, who'd also been raised on a farm. She had no objection to continuing that farming tradition, as long as it wasn't on their families' land—in other words, too close to home. That fall they moved to Iowa and leased a farm. The winter proved harsh, though, and in the spring Ezra's brother Oliver told the couple of his planned move to Oregon with friends. After talking it over, they decided, with some trepidation, to throw in with him. Thus in April 1852, weeks after son Marion's birth, Ezra, Eliza Jane and fellow emigrant William Buck joined the Meeker Party, bound west on the Oregon Trail. Buck fitted out the wagon, Ezra selected the oxen and Eliza Jane took charge of provisioning.

Oxen were the best choice as draft animals. Slower than horses, they plodded along at a steady 2 miles per hour, the pace at which most people walked. Oxen weren't prone to panic and could live on wild forage. They were also cheaper. One could buy a yoke of oxen for the price of a single mule or four oxen for the price of a good horse. In the negative column, oxen were a nuisance to shoe; they had to be rolled onto their backs, which took several strong men. But if worse came to worst, oxen were edible.

The Oregon Trail, as Ezra and Eliza experienced it, had evolved from a fur trade path for packhorse strings to an actual road of sorts. Littering the route was discarded baggage left behind by those who'd overestimated their animals' ability to haul heavy loads over rough ground. Ezra reflected that most emigrants who lost draft animals had failed to properly care for them. Of course travelers themselves succumbed along the route, and crude wooden headstones were not an uncommon sight.

A milk cow strayed off as the party crossed the Missouri River—regarded with a healthy dose of fear as the eastern boundary of Sioux country. Fortunately for the Meekers, the Sioux, as emigrants called the Lakotas, were at peace under the terms of the 1851 Treaty of Fort Laramie and would remain so until the Grattan Fight of 1854 sparked the First Sioux War (see "Worst of the Sioux Wars," by Gregory Michno, in the June 2020 *Wild West*). The Cheyennes in Colorado Territory could prove more troublesome, but only if they felt cheated or disrespected. Some Indians wanted to trade. Others demanded brewed coffee and sugar, a taste they retained for generations thereafter. While some emigrants scorned such behavior as begging, Indians considered it hospitality; in peacetime they themselves never refused to share food with visitors.

The Indians the Meekers and Buck met in 1852 were more curious than confrontational. As a rule wagon masters required every man over age 12 in a train to own a gun (most Plains Indians still relied on bows and arrows), and the wagons kept so close together as to be virtually contiguous. Buffalo, sometimes shot for food, were so numerous that *they* were considered a



Klondike Veggie Strike
Meeker, at far right, poses with customers outside his Yukon region grocery in Dawson City, Canada.

Oliver and Ezra worked briefly as stevedores before staking their first claim some 40 miles down the Columbia in what would become Washington Territory in March 1853. After improving and selling that claim, they and their families became the first white settlers farther north along the Puyallup River. In 1854 Oliver and Ezra's mother, father and other family members set out to join them. Tragically, their mother and a younger brother died en route. By late 1855 Ezra had claimed some 325 acres southeast of present-day Tacoma. Jacob ran the family mercantile store, while Ezra farmed and planted an orchard.

Ezra had made a point of seeking accord with the local Indians, and when the Puget Sound War broke out that fall, waged over land rights negotiated by treaty, the farmer took no part in the fighting. He did later sit on a jury that tried Nisqually Chief Leschi for the wartime killing of state militia Colonel Abram Benton Moses. (The chief's brother, Quiemuth, had already been murdered while in government custody.) Accepting the argument of the defense team, the judge instructed jurors Leschi could not be tried for a killing that took place during war between sovereign nations—namely, the Nisqually tribe and the United States. Ezra and another man concurred and duly hung the jury. At Leschi's retrial the judge gave no such instruction, and jurors sentenced the chief to death. After several postponements the chief was hanged on Feb. 19, 1858. He died with sullen courage. Meeker decried the hanging as a wrongful death (other contemporaries agreed), and a half-century later he wrote an entire book about it.

The next decade proved grueling for the Meekers. The sword fell in January 1861 when Oliver drowned in a shipwreck off the California coast during a buying trip into which the brothers had sunk all their savings. The family was reduced to near poverty. Seeking steady income, Ezra ran for the territorial Legislature in 1861 but lost. Eking out a living, he ran for Pierce County surveyor in 1869 and again lost. Ezra's condemnation of Chief Leschi's fate may explain his political failures.

By then the impoverished Meekers had relocated to an abandoned squatter's claim. But Ezra, who cleared other men's land for subsistence, ultimately delivered his family from penury. On learning that brewers were paying handsomely for imported hops with which to flavor their beer, the Meekers tried their hand at growing hop roots.

Backtracking on the Oregon Trail

In 1906 Meeker set out eastbound from the family manse in Puyallup, Wash.

danger to travelers. Guides at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City, Ore., estimate that about 20 percent of emigrant fatalities were due to either Indian attack or accidents, including drownings at river fords and falls beneath the crushing weight of wagon wheels. (Thankfully, oxen couldn't kick as high as horses or mules.) But the vast majority of travelers who died on or at the end of the trail succumbed to disease, especially cholera, or the effects of malnutrition, notably scurvy.

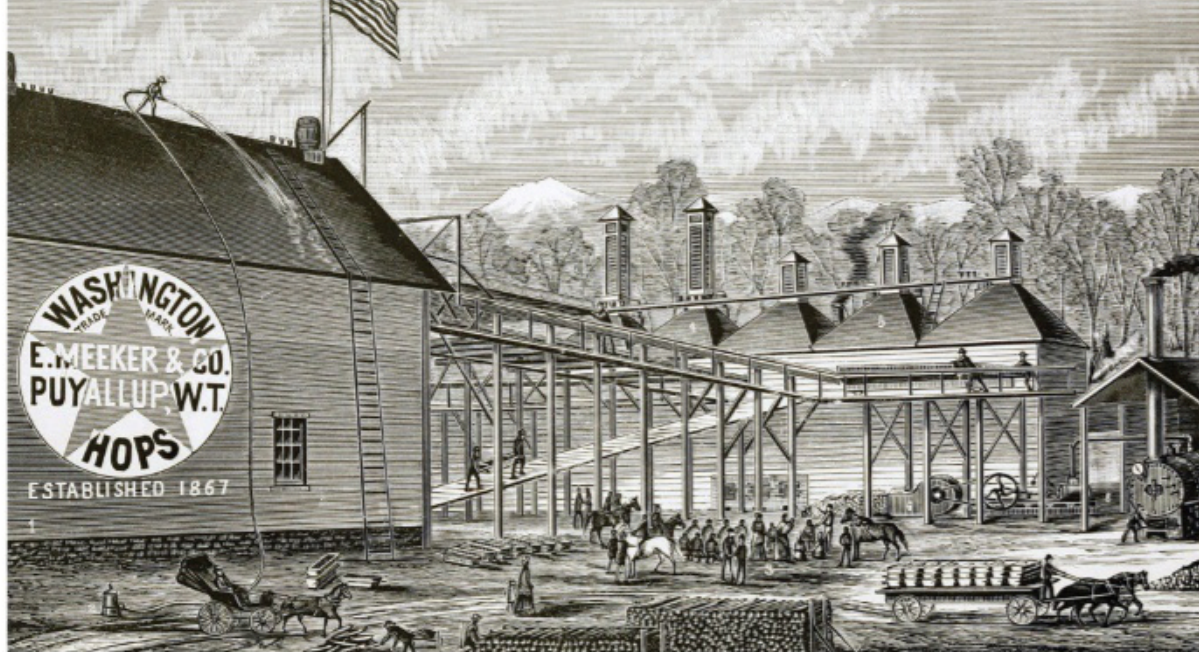
The Oregon Trail split from the California Trail in southern Idaho and became noticeably steeper, prompting many travelers to discard everything but food and ammunition. Buck and other members of the Meeker Party headed for California. Still others tried rafting the Snake and Columbia rivers, which were dead calm in spots and downright deadly in others. Ezra and Eliza continued overland into Oregon. Once below the falls at The Dalles, the couple booked passage for themselves and infant son Marion downriver to Portland with experienced boatmen. Oliver continued overland with the wagons and met them on October 1 after a journey of six months. All their stock, but for the cow lost on the Missouri, made it to Oregon. Ezra had lost 20 pounds and had \$2.75 to his name, but he could justly boast of being an experienced frontier traveler.



The climate proved ideal, and the crop flourished. Building on his newfound success as a hops farmer, Ezra became a booster for the region, penning promotional pamphlets to encourage investment and immigration. He even glad-handed with the likes of railroad mogul Jay Cooke and *New-York Tribune* editor-publisher Horace Greeley of “Go West, young man” fame.

In 1877 the self-proclaimed “Hop King of the World” filed a plat for a township around his cabin named Puyallup, after the river, which he said meant “generous people” in Nisqually. In that spirit he donated land for the construction of public buildings, parks and a network of streets. In 1880 Meeker wrote his first book, *Hop Culture in the United States*, in which he claimed to have made a half-million dollars from his hop crop—a substantial sum indeed in the 1880s. In 1886 he sought the Republican nomination for territorial delegate to Congress but didn’t get it. Voters may have had lingering memories of Chief Leschi. Regardless, politics was not Ezra’s strong suit. He also advocated women’s suffrage, a controversial topic at the time.

In 1887 Eliza Jane decided the family should have a house that better befit their station. She hired an Italian architect, who moved to Puyallup for a year to supervise construction of the Meeker Mansion, completed in 1890 at a cost of \$26,000 (also a substantial sum for the era). In a moment of rock-bottom shrewdness borne out of their previous trials, Ezra had the manse put in Eliza Jane’s name—just in case. He was just in time.



Hopping to It

Growing hops for Oregon brewers, Meeker emerged from poverty and reportedly made a half-million dollars.

Hop aphids descended on the West Coast in 1891. Desperate farmers quickly concocted an oily mixture to fight the infestation. While the mixture succeeded in killing the aphids, it rendered the plants mildewy, ruining the flavor of the hops. The harvest of 1892 was half that of 1891, the last good year in the cycle, and growers who owed Ezra money couldn’t pay him back. Coupled with the nationwide financial Panic of 1893—a cyclical depression that had more to do with the fickle nature of currency than the flavor of hops—Meeker was bankrupted and lost most of his land holdings to foreclosure. When news came three years later of a gold strike in the Klondike, in northwestern Canada’s Yukon region, Meeker’s sons Marion and Fred decided to join the rush, and 65-year-old Ezra tagged along, trying to scrape together investment funds while working long days with pick and shovel.

Among his few successes in the Klondike came when he helped miners fend off scurvy by bringing in tens of thousands of pounds of dried vegetables he and Eliza Jane had grown in Washington. Unfortunately, he sank much of the money he made in vegetables into mining ventures, none of which struck it rich. When son Fred died of pneumonia in Dawson City on Jan. 30, 1901, a grieving Ezra left the Klondike behind. Eliza Jane had managed to save the family mansion back in Puyallup by strategically selling

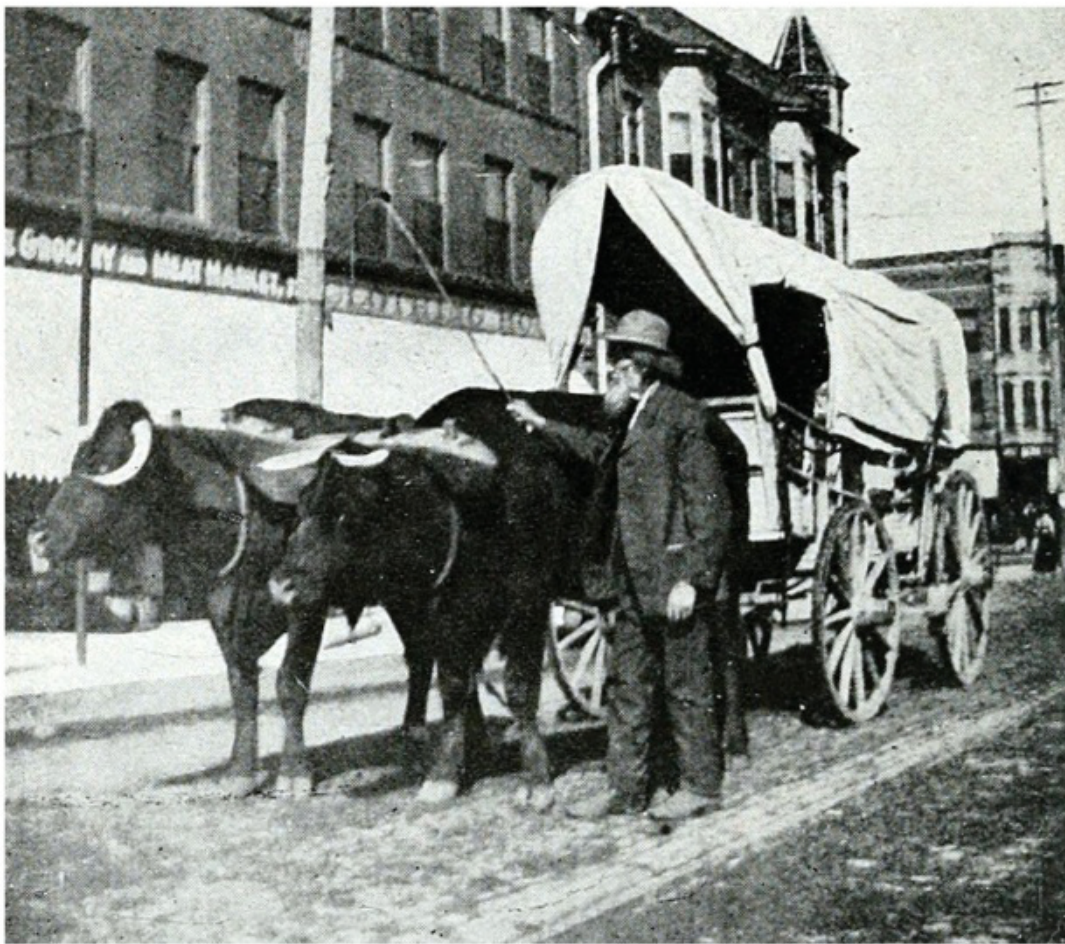
it to their daughter and son-in-law, with the provisos that Ezra and Eliza would receive a \$50 monthly stipend and be allowed to live out their lives there.

With the couple’s future secured, Ezra set out to restore his battered reputation. In 1905 he wrote a book-length treatment of Chief Leschi’s trials, again deeming his hanging an unlawful execution. The book renewed interest in the half-century-old case to some degree, though not until the 21st century did Leschi receive a posthumous pardon. (Historic sites, streets, schools and other places in Washington now bear his name.)

Brewing up Business

As the self-proclaimed “Hop King of the World,” Ezra became a regional booster.





Teammates in Training

In Omaha, Neb., Meeker breaks in a new ox, Dandy, to help Dave pull the wagon.

The oxen were harder to buy in 1906. Ezra's yoke matched Twist, a 7-year-old ox with hauling experience, with Dave, a 5-year-old unbroken range steer. "When we were ready to start," Meeker recalled, "Twist weighed 1,470 pounds, and Dave 1,560. This order of weight was soon changed. In three months' time Twist gained 130 pounds, and Dave lost 80. All this time I fed them with a lavish hand all the rolled barley I dared give and all the hay they would eat."

The septuagenarian wagon master set out that early spring. After initial apathy from people close to home, the ox-drawn Conestoga attracted regular crowds, schoolchildren singing "America (My Country, 'Tis of Thee)" as Meeker planted custom-made marker stones along the route. To get the heavy wagon through axle-deep March snows in Oregon's Blue Mountains, he had to borrow a yoke of oxen. But Twist and Dave made it through Idaho and into Wyoming, past Fort Laramie and along the Platte River.

In early August, soon after reaching the Great Plains, Twist fell suddenly ill. "Yesterday morning Twist ate his breakfast as usual and showed no signs of sickness until we were on the road 2 or 3 miles, when he began to put his tongue out, and his breathing became heavy," Ezra wrote. "I finally unyoked, gave him



JIMMY

a quart of lard, a gill of vinegar and a handful of sugar, but all to no purpose, because he soon fell down and in two hours was dead." Twist may have eaten a poisonous trailside plant or perhaps suffered a heart attack from pulling too heavy a load. Regardless, Meeker gave the veteran ox a proper burial complete with headboard instead of leaving him for the buzzards.

Recognizing Dave needed help, Ezra hired a two-horse team to haul the wagon to Lexington, Neb., where, unable to find a yoke-trained ox, he bought two large milk cows out of desperation. One of the cows wouldn't pull and was sold at a loss. The other at least tried, so Ezra fell back on having it help Dave pull the wagon in parades, while he rented two-horse teams to do the pulling between towns.

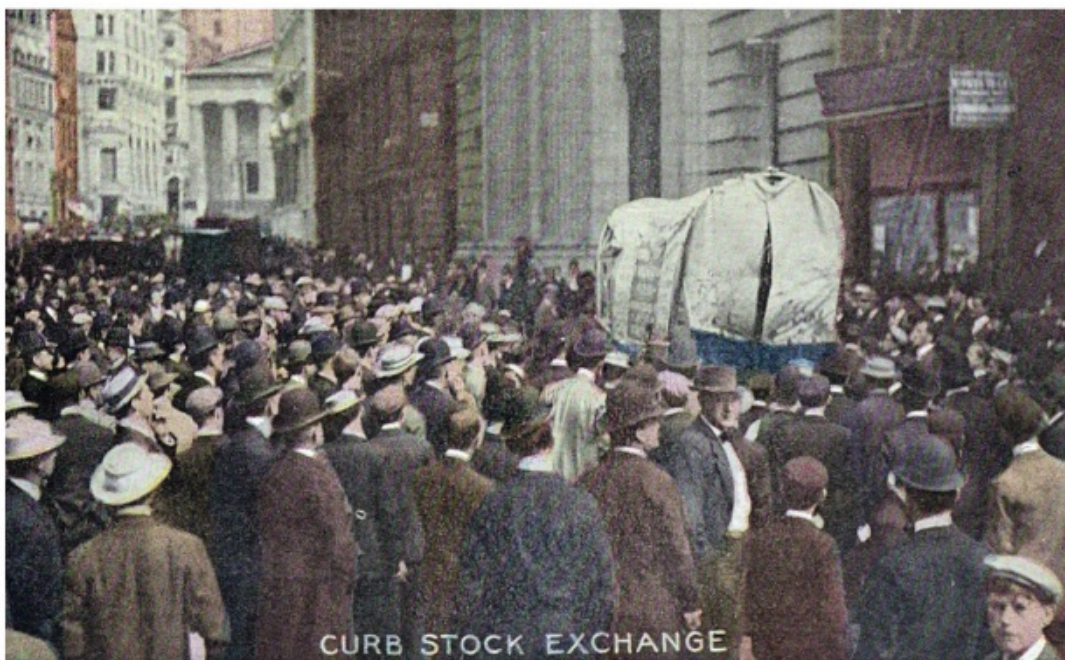
On a spot tour of the slaughterhouse stockyards in Omaha, Meeker spotted a 5-year-old steer simi-

A Pleasant Exchange

Trail's end was especially crowded when Meeker reached the Wall Street district in lower Manhattan.

Of course Meeker also needed money, not just vindication. Perhaps boosterism could again prove his salvation. So in 1906, at age 75, noting the Oregon Trail had been neglected by history, he resolved to raise awareness by taking an ox-drawn covered wagon back East, traveling in the opposite direction from his youthful adventure.

Using hardware salvaged from three wagons he found abandoned in Washington state, Meeker cobbled together a Conestoga facsimile. When setting out in 1852, he'd missed by months the introduction of more appropriate, mass-produced emigrant wagons turned out by the Studebaker brothers, five pragmatic German Americans who conceived what was arguably the perfect vehicle for the Oregon Trail. Studebakers were far smaller than Conestogas, designed to be as light as possible while remaining reasonably sturdy. (Wagons on display at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center are mostly Studebakers.) Meeker's nostalgic Conestoga may have been too heavy for a yoke of oxen. Though no dog lover per se, Ezra paid \$5 for a friendly border collie named Jimmy, as he knew the public loved dogs.





Bully for Ezra!

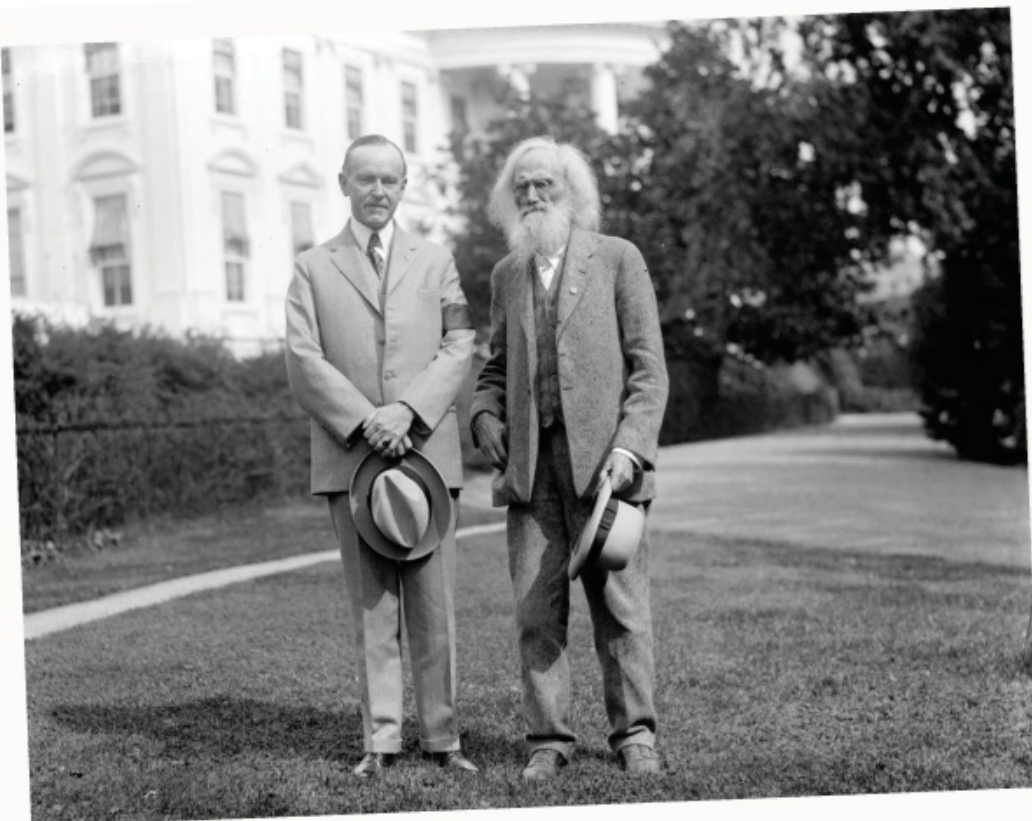
In late fall 1907 a delighted President Theodore Roosevelt greets Meeker in Washington, D.C.

lar in size to Dave. Ezra dubbed the new recruit Dandy, and once Dandy and Dave had bonded, the covered wagon continued under their haulage past cheering spectators in the capital city of Indianapolis, the Ohio cities of Dayton, Columbus and Cleveland, and the New York burghs of Buffalo and Albany. From there the team turned south for Washington, D.C.

On reaching New York City, Meeker was initially refused a permit to enter, though authorities waived enforcement. But an overeager patrolman on Amsterdam Avenue apparently didn't get the memo and ordered Ezra to drive the team to the police station. Meeker refused. The officer then jumped into the driver's seat, but he couldn't get the oxen to budge. Cutting a deal, he allowed Ezra to drive the outfit to a nearby stable. The frustrated wagon master spent a month negotiating for permission to drive his team the length of Broadway. Once granted, he made the trip in six hours. After

Another President Met

Meeker, founder of the Old Oregon Trail Association, meets Calvin Coolidge at the White House in 1924.



side trips to City Hall and Brooklyn, the time came to move on. The next morning Jimmy the collie disappeared. After Meeker posted a \$20 reward, no questions asked, a brazen fellow brought Jimmy back, demanding additional pay for "keeping him."

On Nov. 26, 1907, Meeker reached Washington, and three days later he drove up to the White House to call on its celebrated occupant. President Theodore Roosevelt was so excited that he burst outside without his hat. "Where is your ox team?" he asked. "I want to see it!"

The next summer, after 28 months on the road, Meeker had Dave, Dandy, Jimmy and the wagon shipped back to Washington state by rail. The team later participated in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, Calif., and the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco, among other events.



Ezra's Conestoga
The Washington State History Museum displays the wagon Meeker drove eastbound

When their health ultimately failed, Meeker had each ox in turn slaughtered and their hides sent to a taxidermist. Dave, Dandy and the Conestoga they hauled across America were put on permanent display at the Washington State History Museum.

After years of failing health, Eliza Jane Meeker died in 1909. But Ezra remained active. For instance, in 1916, at age 85, he rode from Washington, D.C., to Olympia, Wash., in a Pathfinder touring car to publicize the need for a transcontinental highway. Six years later he founded the Old Oregon Trail Association, which in 1926 was incorporated as the Oregon Trail Memorial Association. After a bout with pneumonia the intrepid wagon master died on Dec. 3, 1928, less than a month shy of his 98th birthday. Though most remembered for his association with the Oregon Trail, Ezra Meeker had spent the last two decades of his life advocating for the national highways that today stretch from sea to shining sea. There could be no more fitting tribute. **WW**

New Jersey freelance writer John Koster, author of Custer's Last Scout, recommends Ezra Meeker's own memoirs—taken with a grain of salt—as well as a visit to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Baker City, Ore., which boasts a fine display of period wagons and memorabilia.

Fort Worth Six

David Swartz's circa 1888 portrait of six dapper men appears flat and lifeless in comparison to brother John's dynamic 1900 shot of the Wild Bunch (opposite).



SHOOTING TEXAS

The Swartz brothers, the Lone Star State's first family of photographers, proved their worth in Fort Worth

By Richard F. Selcer

David, John and Charles Swartz—three country boys raised in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley in the wake of the Civil War—came to the Texas frontier to seek their fortunes. As professional photographers they found fame if not fortune. Over the course of four decades they changed both the art and business of photography in significant ways while chronicling life in the Lone Star State. Their personal lives were something else, the stuff of dime novels, marred by tragedy, marital problems, bankruptcy and mental illness.

David, John and Charles were among the 11 children born to Philip and Susan Swartz between 1844 and 1864. David, the seventh child, was born in 1854; John, the ninth, followed in 1858; and Charles, the youngest sibling, was born in 1864. Parents and children alike worked in the family mills (flour and

lumber), a necessity even before the war, as Philip Swartz did not own slaves. At some point each of the brothers decided that mill work was not the life for him and hit the road. David went first, heading north to Dayton, Ohio, where he tried his hand at portrait photography and took up with Nellie Barnum, a distant relative of traveling showman P.T. Barnum with her own strong Bohemian streak. She, too, was a photographer, which in part explains David's attraction to her. The lovers soon struck out for Texas, where they worked as itinerant photographers, traveling from small town to small town and offering their services to the locals. That worked until they arrived in staid Cleburne in 1879 and locals discovered they were living together unmarried. When the rumors made it into the local paper, the pair hurriedly left town. On Sept. 1, 1880, the chastened couple tied the knot in Austin. Four years later they landed in Fort Worth, a town



Fort Worth Five

The Swartzes' best-known photo is John's iconic image of the Wild Bunch, which captures Butch Cassidy (far right) and the Sundance Kid (far left).

emerging from its frontier roots with a population of little more than 8,000—big enough to provide steady employment for three working photographers even before the Swartzes arrived. David Swartz's first studio was in Hell's Half Acre, Fort Worth's red-light district. He relocated uptown as soon as he was able.

Swartz advertised heavily in the newspapers and undercut competitors' prices. He also did more than just take pictures; a traditional artist, he rendered portraits in several mediums and made reproductions. Among the latter he produced popular life-sized portraits of Texas legends Sam Houston and David Crockett from original paintings. In letters to his family back home in Virginia he talked up his success.

David's rosy picture of life in Texas persuaded John to head west in 1885. He apprenticed under his big brother (doing business as D.H. Swartz & Bro.) before striking out on his own and opening a studio some 65 miles to the north in Gainesville. Over time John proved an even better photographer than David, though big brother considered himself an artiste and entrepreneur first and a photographer second. John thrived in Gainesville and while there fell in love with one Lydia B. "Blanche" Buck, whom he married in 1895. The couple soon returned to Fort Worth, John renting studio space at 705½ Main (the "½" meaning upstairs). It would remain his business address over the next 18 years and make history in late 1900. John had learned well from his big brother, for he, too, advertised heavily in Fort Worth and surrounding communities. Of note were his social views, quite

broad-minded for the place and time. He actively solicited the "colored trade," advertising to black residents in the *Colored City Directory*. He may not have been a trailblazer, but he was certainly enlightened in his racial attitudes.

Little brother Charles was the last to land in Fort Worth, coming for a working visit in 1890 to see whether his brothers' glowing reports were true. Impressed, he returned home to the Shenandoah Valley only long enough to marry his sweetheart, Virginia "Jennie" Heagy, and await the birth of the couple's first child, Charles Jr. The growing young family then moved to Fort Worth. In time it became clear Jennie was not as smitten with life in Texas as her husband. She pined for home. Like John before him, Charles apprenticed with his brothers before opening his own studio in 1899, just one block from David's.

For a brief time in the late 1890s all three brothers were working in the same town as friendly rivals. Charles distinguished his work by advertising himself as a "view artist," meaning he specialized in outdoor photography—street scenes, architecture, bird's-eye views, etc. He became a familiar sight around town, peddling his bicycle along the dusty streets, heavy box camera balanced precariously over one shoulder. Like his brothers before him, he also advertised relentlessly, in the city directory and newspapers and by printing up and passing out business cards. Charles' personal life may not have been as rosy as that of his brothers. In February 1904 Jennie gave birth to their second child, Louise May, but a year and a half later she returned to

Virginia with the children. They never saw Charles again.

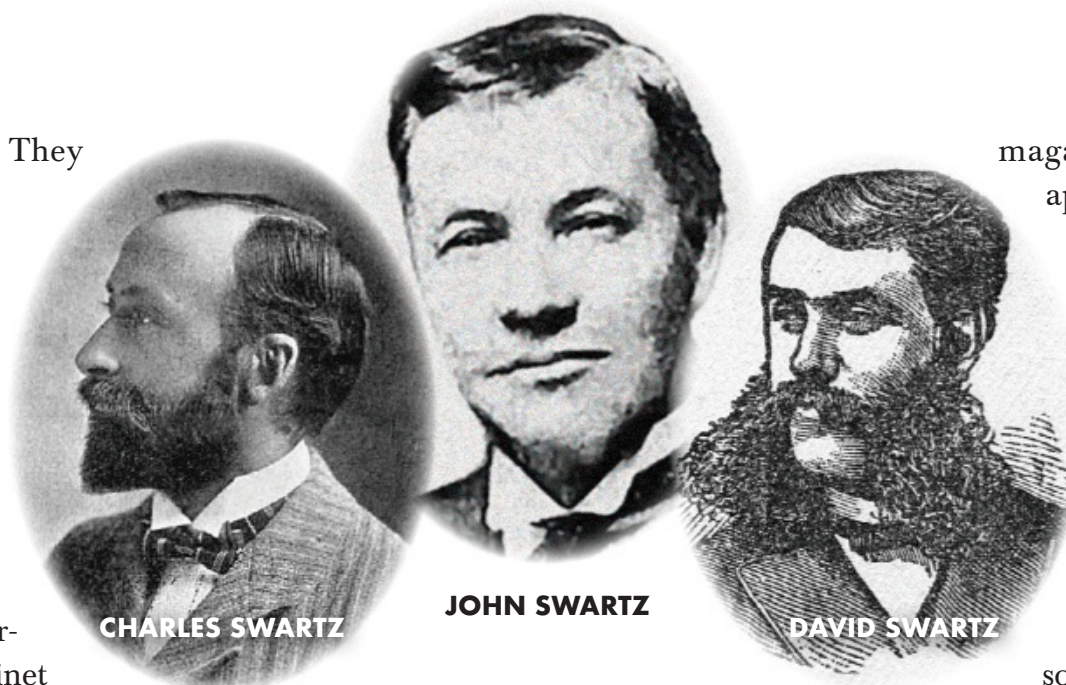
On the business side the Swartz brothers experienced ups and downs.

They practiced photography in the hey-day of cabinet cards—studio photographs mounted on fancy card stock with logos on the front and advertising on the back. The cabinet card had replaced the older *carte de*

visite, which functioned more as a calling card than a picture for display. Cabinet cards became fancier and fancier, bigger and bigger, providing steady employment for professional photographers catering to the middle and upper classes.

The business changed dramatically around the turn of the 19th century after Kodak rolled out handy personal box cameras preloaded with film. No longer limited to paid studio sittings, everyone could be his own photographer. The Swartz brothers adapted, adding film developing to the services they offered. David and Charles also mass marketed their work in the form of cheaply bound souvenir viewbooks. In 1890 David self-published *Photographs of Fort Worth*, a sampling of the photographs and drawings he sold from his studio. He put out a second printing in 1899, while New York-based Albotype Co. published a third edition in 1917 without his involvement. All three used David's 1880s images.

Fortune continued to smile on Charles. It didn't hurt that he was a favorite of Mrs. Henrie Gorman, society grande dame and founding editor of *The Bohemian*, Fort Worth's literary



magazine, in which his work appeared. In 1901 Charles published nearly 100 of his photographs in *Views of Fort Worth, Texas*. He earned a royalty on each 50-cent book, though he surrendered all rights to Albotype. Charles also followed his big brother's earlier example by turning some of his best images into picture postcards, a correspon-

dence medium just catching on.

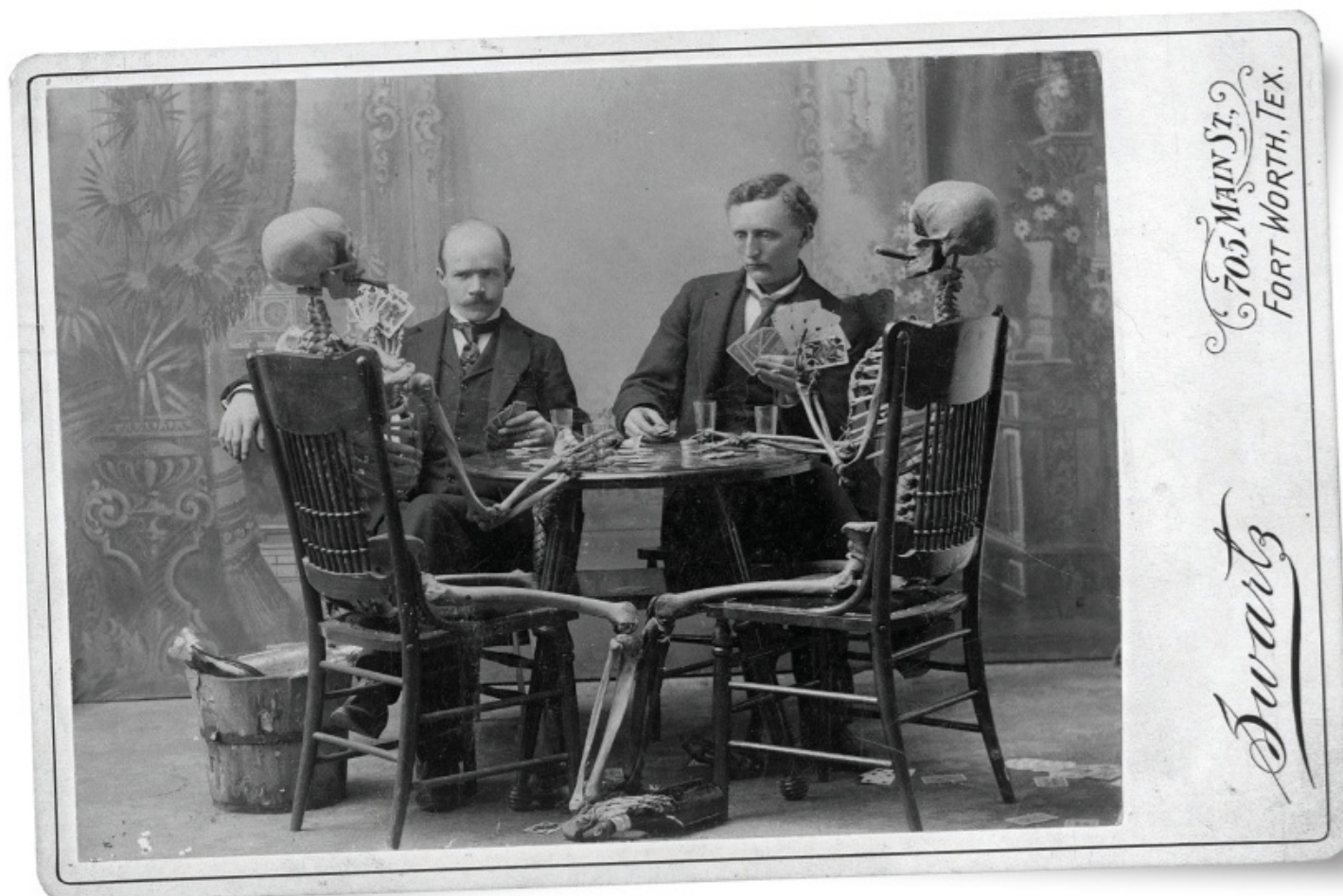
In the late 1890s David suffered a series of financial setbacks that drove him out of business in 1900. He moved his wife and three sons back East to Ohio to be near Nellie's family, but his marriage fell apart anyway. He returned to Texas alone, settling in Dallas and reinventing himself as "Doctor" David Swartz, a purveyor of "medicines and toilet preparations" for women. As always he proved an entrepreneur *par excellence* and made ambitious plans to expand.

John and Charles remained in Fort Worth and in the photography business but followed different paths. Charles fell on rocky financial times that forced him to downsize and take on more contract work. John remained a studio photographer, and his best work won numerous professional awards. An unexpected highlight of his career came on Nov. 21, 1900, when five well-dressed strangers strolled into his Main Street studio seeking a group portrait. John had no idea they were members of the notorious outlaw gang known as the Wild Bunch, come to Fort Worth to lie low after having robbed a bank in Winne-

mucca, Nev. John posed the five against a studio backdrop and took multiple photographs for each to keep. But he retained at least one image for promotional display. That photo caught the eye of passing Fort Worth police detective Charlie Scott, who recognized two members of the gang and got word to the Pinkerton National Detective Agency. By then the quintet had skipped town. The portrait they left behind went on to become an iconic image in Western outlaw history, garnering its creator name recognition.

Deadman's Hand

John Swartz showed a sense of humor with this photograph of an unlikely poker foursome.





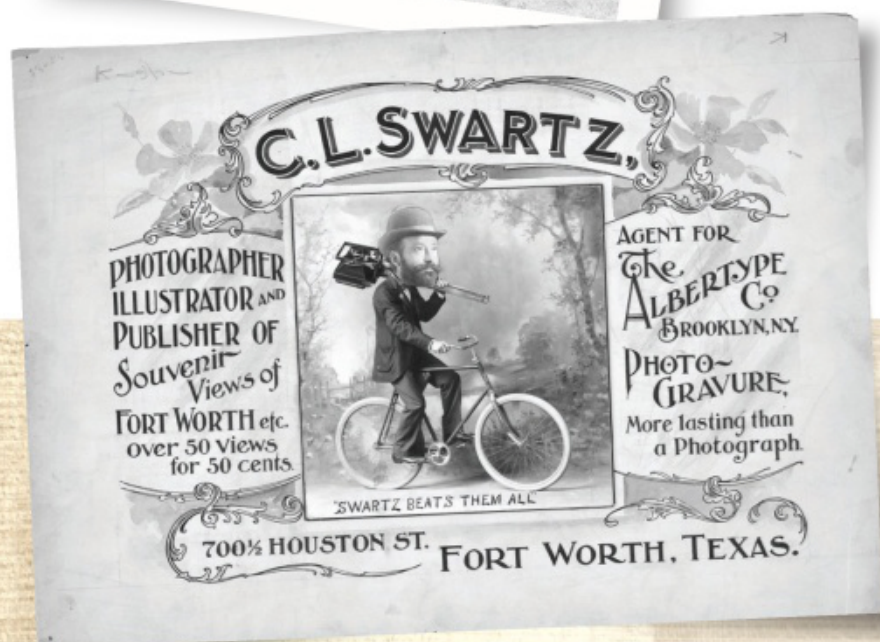
Fort Worth Photo Montage

The brothers photographed the police department in 1901, annual Flower Festival participants (by John) and one of the "little people" (by David).



Charles' life ended tragically in the fall of 1905, soon after Jennie had returned to Virginia with their two kids. That October 6 he was on the south side of Fort Worth, having accepted a commission to photograph an industrial plant. Arriving on scene, he had set up his camera atop a railroad embankment and busied himself clearing the foreground when he heard an approaching train, the Missouri-Kansas-Texas ("Katy") Flyer. Rushing to save his camera, Charles was struck by the Flyer and died on the spot of massive internal injuries. Jennie and children did not attend the funeral. He was buried in Fort Worth's Oakwood Cemetery. A city court appointed John executor of Charles' estate and guardian of his brother's children. He later became Jennie's guardian, after her family committed her to an asylum in Staunton, Va. She died there in 1913. Until the children attained their majority, John continued to look after their interests.

Meanwhile, John's own life was not going so well. First his business hit the skids. Then, in 1912, wife Blanche took the kids and moved in with her parents in Los Angeles. That same year John sold out to George Bryant and went to work for the new studio owner. Blanche



Have Camera, Will Travel

Charles "Beats Them All" Swartz created this composite of himself on his bicycle for the Fort Worth City Directory.

artist, not just a technician, blending composition, lighting and props to create his distinctive palette. John went even further to render an artistic statement with his camera. His portrait of the Wild Bunch, for example, is not just historically significant but an elegantly posed, compelling composition. John also revealed a wry sense of humor through his photographs. In one celebrated image (opposite bottom) he posed two men and two skeletons around a poker table with cards, drinks and cigars in hand.

At a time when most professional photographers were studio-bound, Charles took his camera outside. Bird's-eye views were his forte, and there was no perch too lofty or too risky for him to place his camera to achieve a dramatic shot. Indeed, that proved his undoing when fatally struck by a train in 1905. He also became intrigued with trick photography, in 1904 seamlessly joining separate images of his two children and the family dog to create a composite family portrait. Today we use software such as Photoshop to achieve similar results. —R.S.

TO EACH HIS OWN PALETTE

The Swartz brothers opened shop when photography was in its infancy, an era of burdensome box cameras that produced primitive, static images, either *cartes de visite* or cabinet cards. The Swartzes produced their share of cabinet cards, but as photography evolved, so did they. For instance, they took studio pictures under electric lights when electricity became available.

Each brother took a different approach to his work. David was among the first photographers to seek recognition as an

and John subsequently divorced, and he lost touch with his children. A few years later he relaunched his photography business, hanging on until 1918, when he moved back to Virginia. He was the last working photographer among the brothers. The 1930 census, the last in which he appears, describes him as a farm laborer living in the household of older brother Lemuel and wife, a couple that had lost their own son to suicide by shotgun in 1916. John died on Jan. 17, 1937, and is buried in Mount Jackson, Va.

David sought in vain to reconnect with Nellie before moving to southern California for his health. He spent his waning years in poverty, dying at Los Angeles County Hospital on Nov. 26, 1918. Nellie had his body shipped to Dayton, Ohio, for burial.

With their remains scattered nationwide and their work scattered to the four winds, the Swartz brothers faded into history. So obscure did they become that some historians (like this one) mistakenly conflated the three into one mythical person, “John David Charles Swartz.” Only in the last few years has the trio emerged from the shadows, starting with a retrospective exhibition of their work at the Fort Worth Public Library in 2013.

The Swartz brothers deserve to be remembered for more than just their soap opera lives, for they had a lasting influence on their chosen field and on Fort Worth history. Over the course of nearly four decades they took thousands of images of people, places and events, only a few hundred of which have been identified. Without those pictures Fort Worth’s visual history would be immensely poorer. Their pictures chronicle the city and its people, offering a window into how residents lived around the turn of the century.

Among the Swartzes’ known images are portraits of single young men and women dressed to the nines and staring resolutely into the camera. It seems likely at least some of those portraits were swapped as part of the mail-order bride business that flourished in the frontier West, as no potential bride or groom was likely to commit to marriage without getting a look at her or his future mate. Scores of baby pictures snapped by the Swartzes have survived. The infants, often posed in christening gowns, remain largely unidentified, but the importance of that niche to the professional photographer’s bottom line is

readily apparent. The same has long been true of pictures of children. What proud parent isn’t happy to fork over money to a studio photog-

Short in the Saddle

David Swartz snapped this picture of 3-year-old Milby Edward Guynn (1878–1959) for the boy’s parents.



Sharp-dressed Man

The Swartzes took their share of portraits of minority residents, including this unnamed black gentleman who posed for David.

rapher for a timeless image of their little darling(s)? The brothers left a trove of photos of Fort Worth families, most formally posed in a traditional group- ing centered on the patriarch.

The Swartzes also left dozens of portraits of black and Hispanic residents. Such images are rare for three reasons. For one, minorities comprised no more than 8 percent of Fort Worth’s population in the late 19th century. For another, white photographers (i.e., virtually all studio photographers of the era) did not as a rule seek out such customers. Finally, working-class folks, which included virtually all minorities, did not have the disposable income to spend on such luxury items as studio portraits.

On the business side the Swartzes proved creative, adaptable entrepreneurs (see sidebar, opposite). They used the media of their day to advertise aggressively and offered countless specials and promotions to get foot traffic into their studios. Relentless marketers, they displayed their work in the windows of banks and saloons where the greatest number of passersby would see it. They multiplied the value of their work by printing the images in viewbooks and on postcards. Neither David nor Charles achieved lasting financial security, but they remained on the cutting edge of the business, and as they expanded operations, the brothers trained

the next generation of photographers by hiring assistants (aka “technicians”).

On the technical side they brought the latest innovations in photography to the heartland. On election day 1888 David used the new “magic lantern” technology to put on a public slide show, *The Fort Worth Gazette* having hired him to chronicle the presidential campaign in photos to a rapt audience. He also anticipated modern-day office supply stores by offering copying services if one brought in an existing photograph or painting. Doing business as the Lone Star Copying House, he advertised “duplicates cheap,” subsequently rendering portraits of Crockett, Houston and President Benjamin Harrison, though none of the three had visited Fort Worth.

By the time the last Swartz brother left Fort Worth in 1918, dozens of professional photographers and film developers had filled the void. Few even noticed John’s departure. The Swartzes were no longer news. Decades would pass before historians came to recognize their photographic legacy, as their work lay scattered among countless collectors and



Fiddling Around

Contestants of the 1901 Old Fiddlers Contest pose for Charles Swartz on the Fort Worth Courthouse steps.

repositories. Would Mathew Brady be a household name had his iconic Civil War images remained scattered from hell to Georgia in private hands instead of finding a place of honor in the Library of Congress? The Swartz brothers’ gallery of work should be held in similar regard. [www](#)

Fort Worth author Richard Selcer is a frequent contributor to Wild West and often writes articles and books set in his hometown or Dallas. This article is adapted from his 2019 book Photographing Texas: The Swartz Brothers, 1880–1918, which was reviewed in the June 2020 issue of Wild West and is recommended for further reading.

Kodak’s Moment

This Fort Worth drugstore offered a soda fountain and film developing for the new Kodak personal cameras.

working. He contrived myriad gimmicks to bring in business, such as placing a jar of pennies in his studio window and offering a free sitting to the person who came closest to guessing the number of coins in the jar. He was an early advocate of the modern-day customer service model promising “satisfaction guaranteed” or money back. Few entrepreneurs in the frontier West were bold enough to adopt that business model.

John likewise had the customer in mind when he set aside a corner of his studio as a well-appointed waiting room complete with sofa, reading material and a piano. If a customer could not get an immediate sitting, he was more likely to wait if the surroundings were congenial (consider modern-day auto dealerships that provide coffee, snacks and big-screen TVs).

David and Charles worked the cabinet-card model for all it was worth, having portraits framed in fancy mattes, their logos embossed on the front and advertising copy on the back. Both gave their images a second life by having the best published in souvenir books (David’s first printed in 1890, Charles’ in 1901) they marketed to the public. And when Kodak introduced the personal box camera, the brothers offered developing services. They were always on the cutting edge of the photography business. —R.S.



THEY MEANT BUSINESS

Then as now, a profitable business model was the key to earning a living with a camera. Of the three Swartz brothers David was the most entrepreneurial. He initially set himself up as an itinerant portrait photographer, trundling by wagon to frontier Texas communities that lacked a resident portraitist. Later, while living in Columbus, Texas, he franchised his operation to shooters in the neighboring towns of Brenham and San Marcos. Once settled in Fort Worth he filled the local papers almost weekly with images and accounts of his doings. David’s creative mind never stopped



PICTURE TAKEN IN 1897

Wanted for Murder!

\$200 REWARD

JAMES REDMOND is wanted for the murder of Miss Schumacker in this city on the night of December 8th, 1897 while in the act of robbing her.

Redmond is 30 years old, 5 feet 8 1-2 inches in height, weight 165 pounds, Large Ears, Blue Eyes, Sandy Hair, Dark Complexion; under skin on forehead are some buck shot which you can feel but not see; Tattooed on left fore-arm is Ballet Girl with sword in her hand; on right fore-arm is a Tombstone, Weeping Willow Sailor and Anchor; Wart on left side of neck.

At the time of the murder he was shot in the mouth, and I am informed the bullet entered in center of lower lip and came out in the left cheek—this may have left an ugly wound.

He is a burglar and would steal lead pipe or blow a safe. His talk is of Bowery order, and uses an oath with most every word. May have a Sandy Mustache. Is a dope fiend and is fond of women.

If found arrest and wire

JNO. HAYES, Chief of Police.

KANSAS CITY, MO., February 7th, 1898.

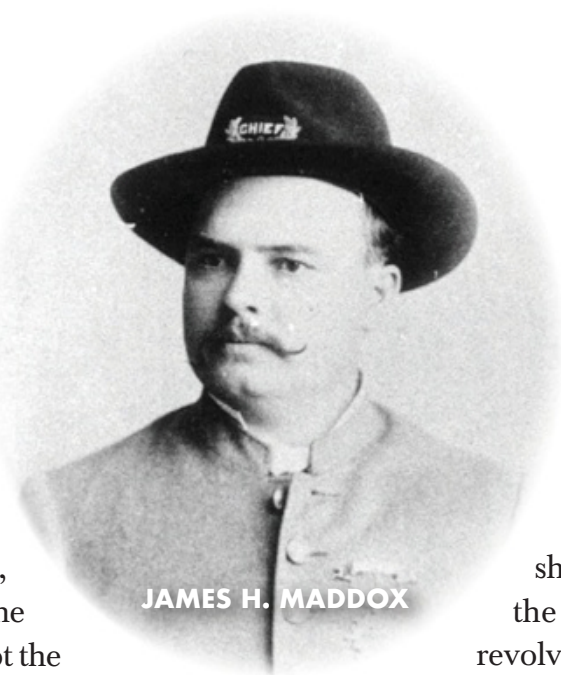
STILL WANTED!

James Redmond was suspect No. 1 in an 1897 murder,
as his recently resurfaced wanted poster reminds us

By Richard F. Selcer

'If Found, Arrest and Wire'

Kansas City Police Chief John Hayes posted a \$200 bounty on murder suspect James Redmond after having nabbed his cohort Jack Kennedy.



Fort Worth, Texas, boasts a historic mine laden with gold—not the yellow stuff of legend but a collection of genuine wanted posters, handbills and related correspondence dating from 1892 to 1908. They'd been collecting dust in the Fort Worth Police Department archives when Deputy Chief Joe Galloway set them aside for safekeeping. When he retired from the force in 1965 to take a job as law enforcement coordinator at Tarrant County College, he brought the collection with him and donated them for preservation. The period posters now reside in the college's Heritage Room.

Law enforcement agencies put the word out on wanted men using traditional posters and handbills, newspaper releases and personal correspondence. Among the notable items in the Tarrant County College collection are correspondence from the Pinkerton National Detective Agency and the Los Angeles police chief to the Fort Worth chief (both dated 1902). Noted Dallas County Sheriff Ben Cabell added a personal note to one 1894 handbill: "Tell [Fort Worth Police Chief] Jim Maddox to ring me up. I want to talk to him." Another 1894 notice, from Travis County Sheriff Robert E. White, gets right to the point: "Broke my jail! 18 men. Don't care much for [recapturing] any of these men except 2." Posted rewards range from \$10 to \$4,000 for such crimes as "absconding" and "false pretenses" to murder and safecracking.

One particularly well preserved handbill sought the arrest of James Redmond, among the more elusive of those long-ago fugitives. On the night of Dec. 8, 1897, he and cohort John F. "Jack" Kennedy tried to rob Miss Emma Schumacher's grocery store in Kansas City, Mo. Though Kennedy, a one-time engineer, preferred robbing trains, he'd heard Schumacher kept \$1,400 in the store safe. Redmond was a common yegg (burglar) who could only dream of a big score. They no doubt thought robbing a lone woman would be like taking candy from a baby. How wrong they were. As soon as they walked in, things went south. When Redmond

shoved past Schumacher to access the safe, the store owner grabbed a revolver from beneath the counter and opened fire. She was mortally wounded in the exchange that followed, but not before one of her slugs hit Redmond full in the face, smashing through his lower lip and exiting his left cheek. Giving up any thought of plunder, the pair fled into the night, perhaps the only robbers in history to have made their getaway in a buggy. They'd left \$49.95 in the cash drawer. A subsequent examination of Schumacher's body turned up a concealed purse containing \$140 in gold coin.

Redmond and Kennedy had met earlier that year in the Jackson County Jail, where Kennedy was awaiting trial for train robbery and Redmond was serving time for burglary. Both were small fry in the criminal underworld. Kennedy claimed to be in tight with the James-Younger Gang, though he was never connected to any of the gang's robberies. He was acquitted and released that October. A month later Redmond was paroled and on Kennedy's referral sought lodging at the boardinghouse of friend Kit Carson Rose, whose wife, Henrietta, was the youngest of the Younger siblings. Days before the botched robbery Kennedy met up with Redmond at the boardinghouse.

Having failed to carry off a simple grocery store robbery, not to mention committing murder and getting shot up in the process, Redmond and Kennedy were in desperate need of a place to hole up. That brought them to the Rose home, knowing Kit would hide them until they could safely flee the area. While Henrietta dressed Redmond's ugly wound, Kennedy ditched the buggy in which the pair had fled and gave their burglar tools to a blacksmith who asked no questions. They felt safe with Kit and Henrietta but threatened to kill the couple's old black servant, William Handy, and wife if they didn't also keep quiet. After laying low for a night and a day, Redmond felt well enough to travel. He and Kennedy decided to go their separate ways. Kennedy returned to what he knew best—train robbing. Redmond dropped out of sight, using a



variety of aliases (including Evans, Coleman, Clark, Seville, O'Neill and Healy) over the next six years—not hard to do in the days before photo IDs and searchable national databases.

Kennedy's luck at his chosen career did not improve. Presumably en route to rob a train on Jan. 28, 1898, his horse fell on the icy streets of Kansas City, leaving him sprawled senseless and bleeding in the street. When police found him there, armed with a shotgun and a brace of revolvers and carrying a mask and false whiskers in a pocket, they locked him up—not buying the explanation he was going “quail hunting.” After further inquiries they linked Kennedy to two other recent train robberies.

Hearing of the arrest, the Roses' servant, Handy, went to the police, telling them of his recent encounter with Kennedy and Redmond and that he'd heard the latter admit to firing the shot that killed store owner Schumacher. Under questioning Kit Rose confirmed the would-be robbers were at his boardinghouse that night but had little to add. A local newspaper reported the developments in an article brazenly titled *AN OLD SLAVE'S CONFESSION FIXES THE GUILT*, prompting Kansas City Police Chief John Hayes to place Handy in protective custody. That October a grand jury indicted both Redmond and Kennedy for murder. Cole and Jim Younger, then serving life sentences in the Minnesota State Prison in Stillwater for the badly botched 1876 attempt to rob the First National Bank in Northfield, were reportedly displeased to have the family name connected to yet another sensational crime.

Meanwhile, with Kennedy in custody, the manhunt was on for Redmond. Within days of the crime Chief Hayes issued what today would be called a BOLO (be on the lookout) on the fugitive, sending it to all neighboring states. The surviving handbill features a mugshot of a scowling Redmond beside the headline *WANTED FOR MURDER!* and the bold-faced offer of a \$200 reward.

They Didn't Flee Far

Redmond and Kennedy hid in a Kansas City, Mo., boardinghouse after their robbery turned murder.

Hayes mailed out copies of the handbill and also sent a version to local newspapers that omitted the fugitive's mugshot.

The description made Redmond out to be one tough hombre. Besides the “ugly wound” in his lip, the fugitive had buckshot lodged beneath the skin of his forehead and several distinctive tattoos on his arms. He spoke like a Bowery bum, swearing “with most every word,” and was a “dope fiend.” He was also said to be “fond of women,” the late Miss Schumacher presumably excepted. At the time Hayes was unaware that Redmond, under the alias John Healy, was also wanted for an 1887 murder in Chicago. No such handbill was necessary for the incarcerated Kennedy, whom papers described as small with an athletic build and “a slight limp, the result of a pistol ball wound gotten, he claims, accidentally but more probably in one of his train-robbing exploits.”

A mailed copy of the Redmond handbill soon arrived in the hands of Fort Worth Police Chief William Rea, a straight-arrow career lawman who'd started as a patrolman in 1879, risen to city marshal in 1883 and begun his third tenure as top lawman in 1897. A curious mixture of the old-fashioned and the progressive, he believed in using the lash at the

city workhouse but also advocated creation of a juvenile justice system. Whereas many officers only took an interest in lawbreakers within their own jurisdiction, Rea was plugged into a nationwide network of city marshals and chiefs of police, and plenty of wanted notices came across his desk in the form of handbills, telegrams and notices in such professional publications as *The National Police Gazette*. If Redmond was anywhere in town, Kansas City authorities could depend on Rea on to arrest and hold him for extradition.

Despite the widespread handbill, however, Redmond remained elusive. Eight months after the botched robbery and murder Kansas City police still had no leads. Unknown to them, the fugitive had fled west to Wyoming, adopted the alias Michael “Reddy” Seville and enlisted in Colonel Jay Torrey’s 2nd U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, aka the “Rocky Mountain Riders”—one of three regiments of Rough Riders authorized by Congress, the best-known being Colonel Theodore Roosevelt’s 1st U.S. Volunteers. That April the United States had gone to war with Spain, and Uncle Sam welcomed all comers. Volunteers had to be no older than 45, between 5 feet 4 inches and 5 feet 10 inches, and weigh no more than 165 pounds. To join a “cowboy cavalry” like the Rough Riders, one also had to be an excellent horseman. Redmond’s regiment had finished its training and gotten as far as Jacksonville, Fla., when the 114-day war abruptly ended.

On August 10 the Rough Riders were ordered to Camp Wikoff at Montauk Point, Long Island, N.Y., to demobilize. It was there a barber from Kansas City recognized Redmond, a former customer, and informed police.

Colonel Roosevelt, the former New York police commissioner and future state governor, agreed to keep the fugitive under surveillance until Kansas City detectives arrived to collect him. Redmond had other plans. On August 20 authorities sent word to Hayes the fugitive had bolted, making him an Army deserter as well as a murder suspect.

The Army showed no interest in tracking him down. Kansas City police still wanted him, but in January 1899 star witness Handy died, making it virtually impossible to convict either Redmond or Kennedy of murder. Authorities dropped its case against Kennedy, who by then was out on bail on the train robbery charges. Tried that June, he was sentenced to 17 years in the state penitentiary. (Though paroled in 1912, presumably for good behavior, he wasted little time returning to his old ways.)

Hayes stubbornly refused to give up the manhunt for Redmond, who continued to drift west, picking up work as a cowhand under the alias William O’Neill. In 1900 he signed on with the Army in Seattle as a horse wrangler and shipped out to the Philippines. But his masquerade soon came to an end. That spring in Manila a lieutenant with the 39th U.S. Infantry who in civilian life had been a reporter for *The Kansas City Times* recognized the fugitive, while a fellow Rough Rider who’d been at Camp Wikoff in August 1898 confirmed his identity. Redmond’s tattoos and the prominent scar on his left cheek clinched it. The Army put him on a transport back to the States, and San Francisco police arrested him when he landed in early April.

Kansas City police secured a bench warrant for Redmond, and the Missouri governor issued a requisition to present to authorities in California. On April 24 the fugitive stepped from a train in Kansas City in shackles and was booked into the Jackson County Jail. Chief Hayes finally had his man. Convicting him would be something else. In November the county prosecutor had no alternative but to dismiss the murder charge against Redmond due to lack of evidence, as Handy was no longer around to testify, and neither Redmond nor Kennedy would turn state’s evidence against the other. It looked like Emma Schumacher would never receive justice in what the papers termed “one of the most cold-blooded crimes ever committed in Kansas City.”

Redmond was no sooner released in November 1900 than he returned to his criminal ways. He didn’t even bother to leave town. Kansas City police soon arrested him for larceny. Convicted and sent to jail, Redmond somehow earned trustee status, giving him the run of the place. The next thing anyone knew, he had walked away.

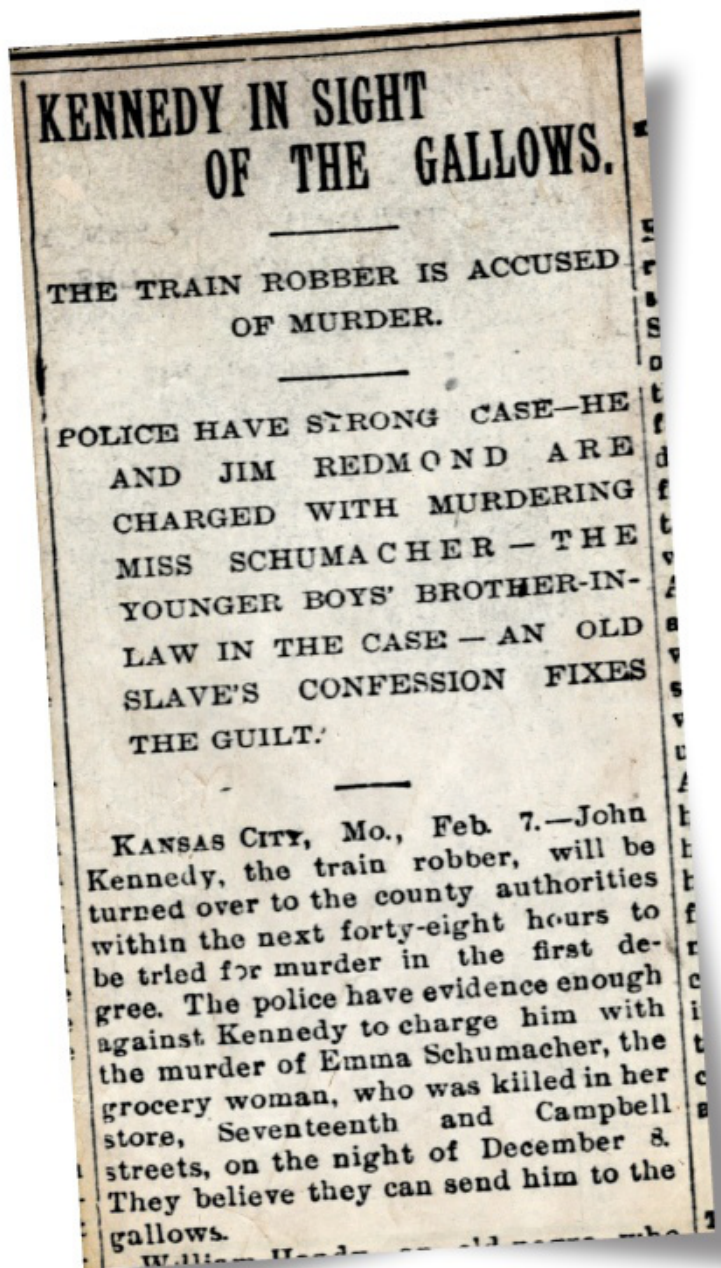
As Redmond was no longer wanted for murder, authorities’ motivation to catch him was likewise diminished. That said, lawmen seldom cleaned out their old handbills, and a \$200 reward tended to stick in one’s mind. In November 1901 police in Marysville, Calif., thought they’d nabbed Redmond after having captured a man in the act of stealing a ham from a hotel. The accused, who gave his name as James Cornell, was sentenced to 60 days in the county jail. In a routine check of the department’s wanted bulletins, the arresting officer became convinced Cornell was Redmond, or else it was “a remarkable case of similarity in appearance.” The Marysville police sent a photo of their prisoner with a detailed description to Kansas City. Alas, it turned out not to be Redmond, so the larceny case remained open.

In August 1903 the fugitive turned up in the “Windy City” as one of a trio that robbed a Chicago City Railway car barn, grabbing more than \$3,000 while

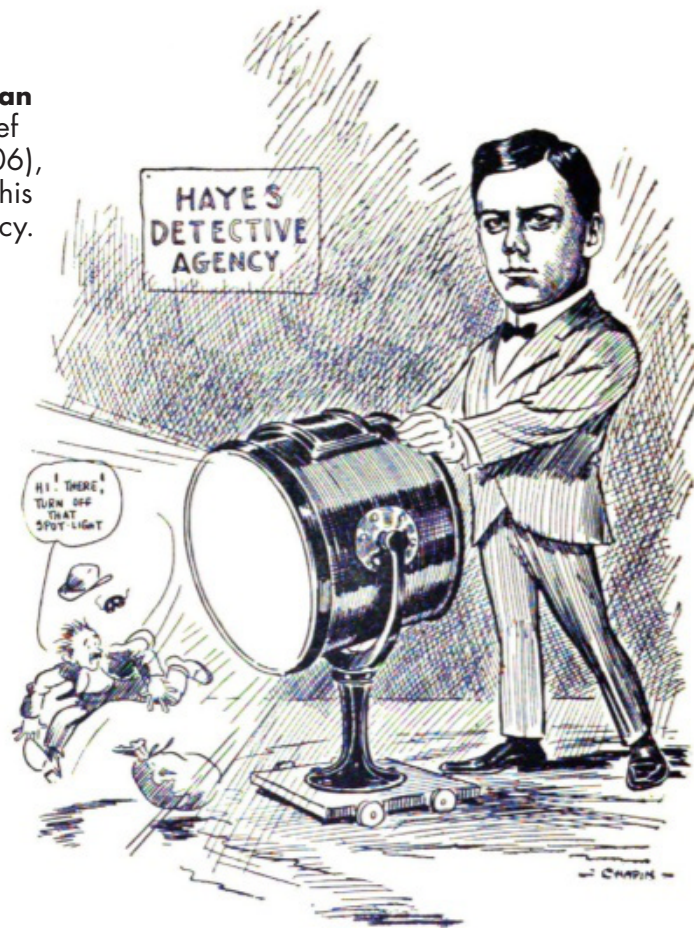
Rea Was Ready

Fort Worth Police Chief William Rea got the Redmond handbill but didn’t get Redmond.





Kansas City Lawman
After serving as chief of police (1897–1906), John Hayes started his own detective agency.



No Witnesses
Authorities dropped the murder charges against Kennedy in 1899 and Redmond the following year, as key witness William Handy had since died.

phine, knowing he was a dope fiend. Still he did not crack. All they could get out of him was a smug admission: “I’m a thief. What of it? There are others in Chicago.” Redmond could afford to be smug; the evidence against him was circumstantial, and he had an airtight alibi, something that had repeatedly saved him from prison and/or the gallows. Police had to let him go. Then fate stepped in.

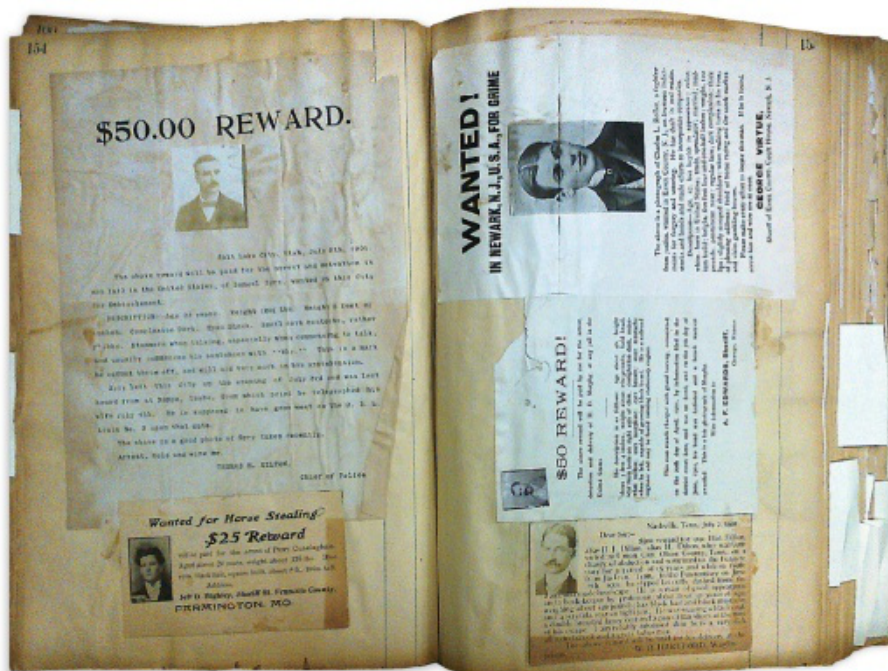
Within a month, some 16 years after having wantonly murdered Chicago neighbor Ferdinand Pennerolz, Redmond happened across someone familiar with the cold case. As authorities were looking for someone named “John Healy,” his alibi at the time, the fugitive apparently thought it was safe for him to remain in the city. But a longtime Chicago policeman recognized Redmond and arrested him, and diligent prosecutors soon found witnesses to testify against him. Convicted in January 1904, he was sentenced to 14 years in the penitentiary. Cold comfort to Schumacher’s family, but the law had finally caught up with her killer.

Though the saga of fugitive James Redmond reveals deep flaws in the criminal justice system of his day, it also offers proof of the power of wanted posters to raise public awareness—and to make legends of outlaws. A cowardly killer, failed thief and deserter, Redmond could hardly be numbered among the “most desperate outlaws in the country,” but his wanted poster put him

killing two men and wounding two others. Authorities quickly arrested two suspects, one of whom was later identified as Redmond. At the time of his arrest he had on his person \$560 in cash and a revolver of the type used in the heist. Newspapers stirred the pot by calling him “one of the most desperate outlaws in the country.” Chicago police sweated him for hours, and when that didn’t work, they proffered him mor-

Still Wanted After All These Years

The Fort Worth Police collection (1892–1908) boasts period wanted posters, handbills and correspondence.



in the public eye, and newspapers embellished his story by playing up his connection to the Rough Riders, even placing him amid Roosevelt's celebrated charge up Cuba's San Juan Heights. Redmond would likely have been forgotten altogether had his wanted handbill not emerged after having languished for decades in police department dead files. Its rediscovery provides fodder for future generations of historians.

This particular criminal case also points to the power of a famous, or infamous, name. After their botched grocery store holdup Redmond and Kennedy might have remained out of the headlines had they not been linked to the James-Younger Gang, among the best known train and bank robbers in American history. Then, while on the lam, Redmond was linked to Rough Rider and future U.S. President Roosevelt. In the early morning hours of Nov. 3, 1922, Kennedy's train-robbing career came to a violent end after he and an accomplice hit a train out of Memphis. While making their getaway, they stumbled across a posse that shot them to pieces. According to newspaper reports, Kennedy's accomplice was Harvey "Kid Curry" Logan, one of the Big Five of the notorious Wild Bunch at the turn of the 20th century. Only problem was the real Kid

GEO. C. WITTE, Proprietor,
Augusta Steam Gandy Factory,
—MANUFACTURERS OF—
Staple and Fine Confectioneries,
29-31 McGowan Street.

Augusta, Ga., December 4

To any Sheriff, Chief of Police,
Deputy, Constable, Marshall or
Officer of the State, Greeting:

\$25.00 Reward.

\$25.00 reward for the arrest of Henry E. Bowman, white, see his picture below:

145



HENRY E. BOWMAN,
His Father's home is Cedartown, Ga.

He left Augusta, Ga., November 20th, by private conveyance to Bath, S. C., took the train at Bath, S. C., for Batesburg, S. C., got conveyance there to Prosperity, S. C., arriving there night of the 20th November, got a very early start there next morning by private conveyance to Newberry, S. C., arrived there about 8:10 A. M., just in time for the train for Laurens, S. C., after this have lost trace of him. He spoke of going to Greenville, S. C., and then to Atlanta, Ga.

He is about 25 years old; 5 1/2 feet tall; weighs about 155 pounds; black eyes; dark hair and mustache, mustache curls on ends; two of his front teeth are gone, several of his front teeth have gold fillings.

He wore, when he left here, a dark suit of clothes, sack coat, the whole suit is made out of the same style of goods; dark blue overcoat and black velvet collar; dark brown soft hat, raw edges, no binding on edge of hat; dark tan lace shoes, about size 7; wears 61 or 7 hat.

We have a warrant out for his arrest, Larceny after Trust, and have fully fifty more charges against him. He is one of the biggest rascals and thieves out of the Chain Gang, and be ought to be there in the Penitentiary for the protection of the State and society. If you get him Wire at our expense immediately and we will send officer, with reward and warrant after him.

Please Distribute the Extra Circulars among your Brother Officers, and greatly oblige,

Respectfully yours,
Augusta Steam Gandy Factory.

Badman Henry Bowman

This December 1899 circular calls him "one of the biggest rascals and thieves out of the Chain Gang."

Pinkerton's National Detective Agency.
FOUNDED BY ALLAN PINKERTON, 1850.

WM. A. PINKERTON, Chicago, }
ROBT. A. PINKERTON, New York, } Principals. GEO. D. BANGS, Gen'l Sup't, New York.

D. ROBERTSON, Ass't Gen'l Sup't Middle Division, CHICAGO.
JAS. MCPARLAND, Ass't Gen'l Sup't Western Division, DENVER.

ATTORNEYS,
SEWARD, GUTHRIE & STEELE,
New York.

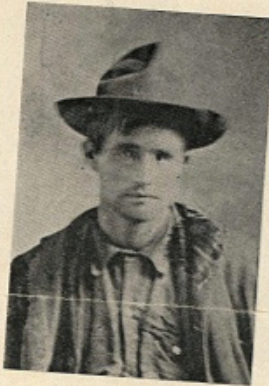
CONNECTED BY TELEPHONE.

OFFICES.
KANSAS CITY, 622 MAIN STREET, F. H. TILLOTSON, Supt.
BOSTON, 30 COURT STREET.
NEW YORK, ST BROADWAY.
PHILADELPHIA, 441 CHESTNUT STREET.
CHICAGO, 301 FIFTH AVENUE.
ST. PAUL, GERMANIA BANK BUILDING.
DENVER, OPERA HOUSE BLOCK.
PORTLAND, ORE., NARGUAM BLOCK.
SAN FRANCISCO, CROCKER BUILDING.
MONTREAL, ST. HY. CHAMBERS.



**\$150.00
REWARD.**

**ARREST FOR
BURGLARY.**



ESCAPED FROM JAIL.

The FIDELITY & CASUALTY CO., of New York, offers \$50.00, and Mr. James Gillispie, Sheriff of Harper County, Kansas, \$100.00, making a total reward of \$150.00, for the arrest and detention of Thomas Morris, a good photograph of whom appears above; he is described as follows:

Name	Thomas Morris.
Nativity	American.
Age	25 years.
Weight	135 pounds.
Complexion	Dark.
Eyes	Black.
COLOR	White.
Height	5 ft. 7 in.
Build	Medium.
Color of Hair	Very dark brown.
Nose	Regular.

REMARKS:—Eyes very small and close together, the left one slightly crossed. Thomas Morris was arrested at Winfield, Kansas, November 27th, 1899, and was identified as one of the men who burglarized the State Bank at Bluff City, Kansas, on the night of November 25th, 1899. He was taken to Anthony and lodged in jail to await trial, but on the night of December 22nd, 1899, broke jail and is now at large. This man will probably be found associating with "tramps;" is a miner by occupation, and may be found in some of the mining camps.

If found, arrest and notify by wire, the nearest of the above listed offices.

Or, F. H. Tillotson,
Resident Supt.
January 6th, 1900.

PINKERTON'S NATIONAL DETECTIVE AGENCY,
622 Main Street,
Kansas City, Mo.

Curry had been killed by a posse in 1904 following an unsuccessful train robbery outside Parachute, Colo.

James Redmond and Jack Kennedy are no longer fugitives from justice, having long since answered to a higher court. But as subjects of wanted posters and handbills, they and countless desperadoes like them (such as Henry Bowman, wanted for larceny and 50 other charges, and Tom Morris, wanted for burglary and escaping jail) remain appealing to Western historians and researchers. The vast majority of period posters and handbills are gone, long since crumbled to dust or tossed out with the trash. The few that survive are more than pricey collectibles; they are priceless research sources. The collection at Fort Worth's Tarrant County College certainly rates in the "Most Wanted" category. www

Fort Worth author Richard F. Selcer writes often about the Old West. His latest book is *Photographing Texas: The Swartz Brothers, 1880-1918* (reviewed in the June 2020 issue of *Wild West*), and his article about the brothers appears on P. 64. Selcer is working on the multivolume history *Law and Disorder on the Trinity*, a primer on Western law enforcement. His primary sources for this article were wanted posters and newspapers of the era.

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Dolls, a miniature canoe and a tot-sized teepee are part of a child's life on the Plains exhibit. Below is one of several colorful tobacco bags displayed alongside ceremonial pipes.

OLD WEST AND OLD CARS

KNOWN FOR ITS CLASSIC CAR COLLECTION, CALIFORNIA'S BLACKHAWK MUSEUM ALSO RADIATES THE SPIRIT OF THE OLD WEST

BY LINDA WOMMACK

Since opening in 1988, the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, California, has drawn auto enthusiasts with its collection of classic, rare and unique cars. For the past five years it has also attracted Western history buffs, as in 2015 curators opened a gallery of North American frontier artifacts dubbed the Spirit of the Old West. Just off the mezzanine, the main gallery relates in adjacent exhibits the history of American Indians and that of the settlers who spread across the continent in the 19th century, while the second floor houses a related natural history display.

The collection traces its origins to Tecumseh's Frontier Trading Post in Cody, Wyo., which owner Jerry Fick opened in 1989 as a gift shop and repository for his Indian, pioneer, cowboy and gunfighter artifacts, as well as thousands of Old West miniatures he'd crafted. In 2014 Fick sold most of the collection to Blackhawk Museum co-owner Ken Behring and permanently loaned the remainder for display at the museum a



half hour east of San Francisco. (Behring and classic car enthusiast Don Williams had collaborated on the original Blackhawk Automotive Museum.)

A highlight of the collection is a 140-foot-long topographic table, dotted with miniatures, that Fick created to spotlight significant events in Western history. The "American Settlers" exhibit is divided into five time periods—1800 Expedition, 1840 Migration, 1860 Expansion, 1880 Wild West and 1900 Legend. The first explores the lives of such legendary frontiersmen as Kit Carson, Jedediah Smith and John Colter. During the second period came wagon-bound emigrants on the 2,000-plus-mile Oregon and California trails. Manifest Destiny was the guiding principal in the period of expansion, highlighted by the California Gold Rush. The Wild West calls out storied gambler-lawman Wild Bill Hickok (though he was killed in 1876) and that most famous/infamous of cow towns, Dodge City. Legends concludes with plenty of information about Western-themed dime novels, showman Buffalo Bill Cody and Oklahoma's celebrated Miller Brothers



Clockwise from upper left: The Wild West gets its due with items related to Jesse James, Wyatt Earp and other gunfighters and lawmen; the buffalo and the eagle are symbols of Indian culture; this warbonnet features bald eagle feathers; the golden eagle feather regalia also attracts attention.

101 Ranch, which followed Cody's example and put on its own show with such headliners as Bill Pickett, Hoot Gibson and Tom Mix.

The "Native American" exhibit explores many facets of Indian life, such as family, spirituality, ceremony, leadership and war. Highlights include displays relating Iroquois and Pawnee family life, various religious beliefs, spiritual stories rooted in the natural world, creation myths, dance and ceremonies to honor the dead. Artifacts on display range from clothing and jewelry to cradles, peace pipes, tools and weaponry. Among other notable Indian leaders profiled are Tecumseh of the Shawnees, Chief Joseph of the Wallowa band of Nez

Perces and Lakota leaders Red Cloud, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse.

Throughout the extensive natural history section upstairs are full-size dioramas and displays centering on such keystone American species as bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, elk, moose, foxes, Wolverines, grizzly bears, black bears, raccoons, bobcats and rattlesnakes. The exhibit spotlights the American bison (aka buffalo), a species essential to Plains Indians, who ate its meat, used its hides to make tipis and clothing, and carved its bones into tools and utensils. An estimated 50 million buffalo roamed the Plains in the early 19th century, before unchecked market hunting drove them to near extinction, thus forcing the tribes to give up their traditional free-roaming ways.

The museum, whose permanent displays include an Into China gallery and an Art of Africa exhibit, is at 3700 Blackhawk Plaza Circle in Danville. For more information call 925-736-2280 or visit blackhawkmuseum.org. [www](http://blackhawkmuseum.org)

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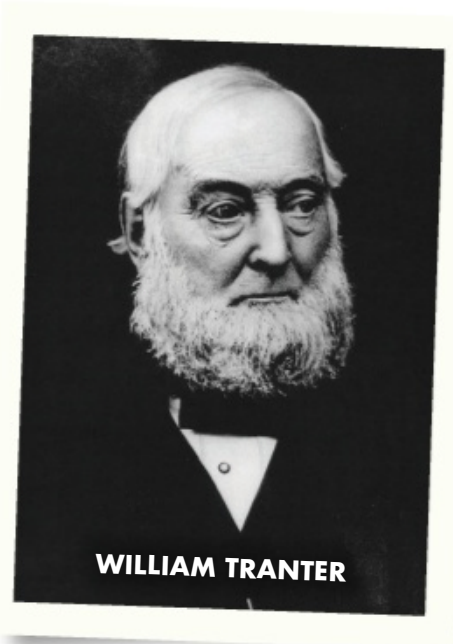


PERCUSSION FROM ACROSS THE POND

FAMED DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDER
ALLAN PINKERTON FAVORED THE TRANTER REVOLVER,
A BRITISH IMPORT THAT MADE ITS WAY WEST
BY GEORGE LAYMAN

While American heavies such as Colt and Smith & Wesson were the most popular revolvers in the latter half of the 19th century, some Westerners chose wheelguns from lesser-known manufacturers. Webley's double-action British Bulldog was the best-selling import, but others also found favor, including the Tranter. The history of the double-action revolver overseas harks back to the early 1850s, and from the percussion era well into the metallic cartridge period British gunsmith William Tranter was a leading proponent of such handguns.

Born in 1816, Tranter was the eldest son of a Birmingham blacksmith. At age 14 William apprenticed with local gunsmithing firm Hollis Bros. & Co. Nine years later he set out on his own, using a small inheritance from a late uncle to buy out the business of one Robert Dugard. "William Tranter (successor to R. Dugard), Gun and Pistol maker, for home and exportation, No. 29.5 Whittall St., Birmingham," one 1841 advertisement



read. "Percussion caps, waddings, implements, barrels, locks and furniture of every description." Tranter remained on Whittall Street until 1849, taking on younger brother David as an apprentice and partnering with brothers John and Isaac Hollis (1844–49) and Isaac Brentnall Sheath (beginning in 1845). Between 1854 and 1860 the thriving gunsmith had shops and a steam machinery yard at 50 Loveday St., while his factory was at 13 St. Mary's Row, in the heart of Birmingham's gunsmithing quarter.

By 1853 Tranter had produced more than 8,000 of the Model 1851 double-action revolver, designed by Robert Adams. That same year he began manufacturing his own double-action revolver, built on the Adams-style frame and featuring a detachable bullet rammer that fit into a peg on the frame. Two years later he produced an improved version, its rammer held in place by a keyed peg on the frame and a hook on the barrel. He also produced his own variation of the Beaumont Adams revolver dubbed the Tranter/Adams/Kerr revolver.

THE OLD BRITISH EXPAT ALSO FOUND ITS WAY TO THE SILVER SCREEN IN THE 1971 WESTERN *HANNIE CAULDER*

1861

Confederate Brig. Gen. Francis T. Nicholls of Louisiana carried this Tranter 9 1/2-inch, scroll-engraved percussion double-action revolver in the Civil War until wounds suffered in 1863 at Chancellorsville, Va., knocked him out of action.

Sometime in 1856 Tranter began production on his most streamlined design, advertised as the Third Model double-trigger, its rammer secured to the frame by a screw. He continued producing percussion versions of his revolver well into the metallic cartridge period, as he and other skeptics felt the self-contained cartridge was just a passing fad. Between 1857 and 1861 the Massachusetts Arms Co. of Chicopee Falls produced a double-action Navy revolver based on the Adams and Kerr patents that was similar to Tranter's early pistols, and during the Civil War the federal government bought 600 of 1,000 of that inspired model. Around the same time Tranter's sleek design became popular "across the Pond," and his double action competed with the American-made Starr revolver.

Tranter's offerings were a hit with the Confederacy. Prior to the Union blockades two New Orleans companies—A.B. Griswold & Co. and Hyde & Goodrich—imported the popular British revolvers. Shortly after the Battle of Chancellorsville Major Heros Von Borcke, a Prussian officer in service to the Confederacy, presented an exquisite cased Tranter (Serial No. 8673T) complete with accessories to celebrated cavalry commander Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart. That revolver survives and was on display for many years at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C.

In the postwar period Scotsman Allan Pinkerton, founder of the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, carried a pair of .442-caliber Tranter revolvers for some time and armed agents of his famed organization with the sleek and quick-firing Tranter double-trigger. On one occasion in 1868 Pinkerton and another detective were escorting a prisoner by steamboat from Galveston, Texas, when the prisoner jumped overboard in a bid to escape. A succession

of shots from Pinkerton's twin Tranters convinced the escapee to paddle back into custody. A nickel-plated Model 1879 Tranter revolver bearing the engraving MADE FOR W.A. PINKERTON BY THOS. M. TRANTER, 16 WEAMAN ST., BIRMINGHAM was presented to one of Pinkerton's sons in 1885. (Thomas Tranter was another of William's younger brothers.) That same year William retired. He died on Jan. 7, 1890.

Tranters did pop up periodically in the Old West, but they were not an inexpensive proposition. During the percussion and cartridge eras the British imports could be had in .36, .442 and .500 (.50 in American terminology) calibers. Surviving models, especially those in cased sets or high-grade condition, remain relatively expensive, fetching anywhere from \$1,500 to \$9,000 on the antique firearms market.

The old British expat also found its way to the silver screen. In the 1971 Western *Hannie Caulder* Raquel Welch's title character uses a Tranter made specially for her by a shady gunsmith played by Christopher Lee. In 2001 Hollywood armorer and gun collector Larry Zeug loaned his .442 Tranter to Ernest Borgnine (1917–2012) for the Western adventure film *The Long Ride Home*, co-starring Randy Travis. During preproduction Borgnine had asked if Zeug had a pistol whose trigger pulled more easily than a single action, and the actor ended up carrying the double-action Tranter throughout the film. While the Tranter was far from a household name in the real Wild West, for a select few then and later in Hollywood it was the weapon of choice. **WW**

This period wooden case holds a Third Model Tranter and a bullet mold marked W. TRANTER'S/PATENT.





Mysteriously, though the date on the building at left reads "1842," Cherry Creek wasn't platted until spring 1873.

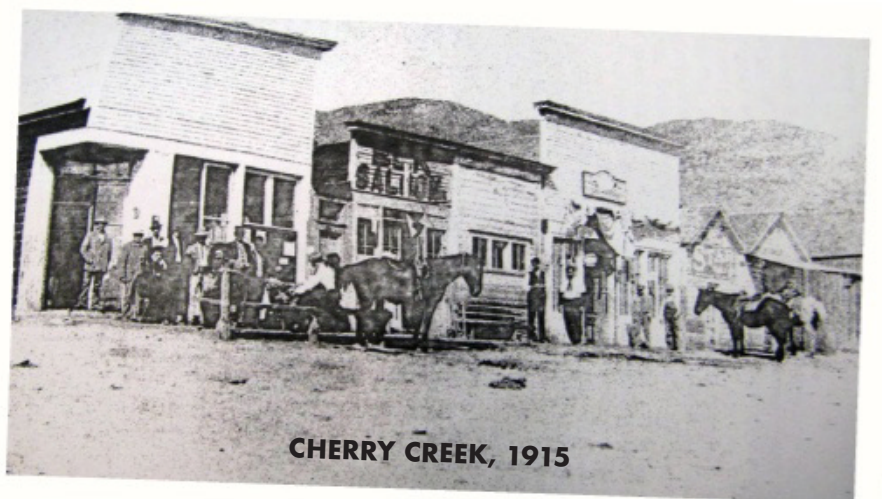
CHERRY CREEK, NEVADA

FOLLOWING IN THE HOOFPRIENTS OF THE PONY EXPRESS,
THIS GOLD BOOMTOWN RODE A BUMPY TRAIL

BY LES KRUGER

In the spring of 1860 Mormon pioneer Howard Egan, superintendent of the Pony Express line from Salt Lake City into east central Nevada, opened a relay station in a canyon 5 miles south of the future townsite of Cherry Creek. When the express folded 18 months later, the station continued to serve stagecoaches plying the Overland Trail until 1869, when the transcontinental railroad supplanted the stages. All the while wealth lay beneath the wheels of both conveyances. Indians had turned up ore in the canyon in the early 1850s, and in 1861 volunteer soldiers on a reconnaissance march through Egan Canyon, as it became known, found gold-bearing quartz. Two years later John O'Dougherty founded the Gilligan Mine, and the rush was on.

On Sept. 21, 1872, Egan Canyon prospectors John Corning and Peter Carpenter located the Teacup Mine (aka "TiCup") to the north along Cherry Creek. News of the rich strike traveled fast, drawing miners and their families to the site. By the spring of 1873, when developers platted the town of the same name, the population had surged above 1,000, and residents had opened a schoolhouse (still standing) and a post office (which served Cherry Creek until 1974). Twenty mines were in operation, carting off ore rich in gold and silver.



A decline in production and a major fire at the district-leading Star Mine precipitated a slump. But by 1880 new finds helped Cherry Creek rebound. By 1882 its population was approaching 8,000, three-quarters of whom worked in the mines. The three principal mines—the Star, Grey Eagle and Exchequer—each employed more than 200 men. Booming Cherry Creek boasted five mercantile or general stores, a millinery, two clothing stores, a pharmacy, several restaurants, Lou Parker's laundry, three butcher shops, one brewery and two dairies, three livery stables,



a Wells Fargo express office and a stage line. As many as 28 saloons served the thirsty miners. News soon circulated that a \$2,000 hotel had been built to supplement the three or four overcrowded boardinghouses. All that prosperity lured *The White Pine News* from Hamilton, though Cherry Creek was unable to wrest the White Pine County seat from that burg more than 50 miles to the southwest. Anyway, the party wouldn't last.

In 1883 a nationwide economic depression shuttered many of the mines, and five years later a devastating fire razed much of the business district. The remaining residents rebuilt, many of them finding work either in the local brickyard, the sawmill or the granite quarry. They found ways to bond outside of work. In 1891 the men formed a Grand Army of the Republic post and a Miners' Union. Other fraternities followed, including the Masons. The only church in town was Catholic, built on the donations of miners then averaging \$6 for a 10-hour workday.

While the work was hard, recreational opportunities were plentiful in the good years. Residents held social gatherings and dances at the Williamson dance hall or in the hall above John Carlson's mercantile store. Local accordionists, fiddlers and guitarists performed, the dances (quadrilles, waltzes, the Virginia reel) going all night, interrupted only by a light meal at midnight. Traveling shows stuck around town for two or three days. When the ladies gathered for quilting bees or tea parties, the men were free to bet on the horses at a track south of town.

Life in Cherry Creek was not all cherries and sweetness. Turf wars on the surrounding rangeland saw several ranchers and cowboys shot and killed, and on Nov. 7, 1894, a few days after an election day squabble, Pat Dolan blew neighbor Pat Greene's brains out on the sidewalk with a shotgun. Of greater concern to most were rattlesnakes, considered scourges worse than coyotes or scorpions. Stories abound of strikingly large rattlers turning up in pantries, bedrooms, parlors and outhouses. Thankfully, the local Shoshones were friendly. But when



Clockwise from top left: Several houses survive; squared timbers and a corrugated metal roof mark this former saloon; the Egan Mountains loom behind stone outbuildings; and this weathered cabin still boasts its stovepipe.

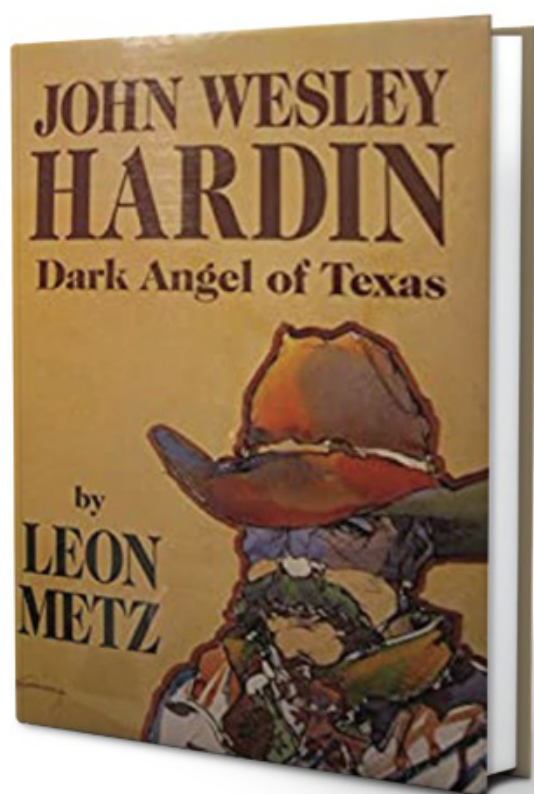
an 18-year-old Indian girl died of smallpox, fear prompted townsfolk to push out the survivors.

Meanwhile, mining continued to have its ups and downs. Production surged from 1905 to 1910, and in 1927 the Nevada Standard Mining Co. invested in the district. It eventually bought up 41 claims, actively working the ever productive Star and several other mines until World War II. But the boom times finally ended in the 1940s. Today scarcely 20 people make Cherry Creek their permanent home. They live amid ruins and reminders of the town's heyday, including the original Cherry Creek School, which has been converted into a museum. **WW**

**TURF
WARS
SAW
SEVERAL
RANCHERS
AND
COWBOYS
SHOT AND
KILLED**

MUST SEE, MUST READ

RICHARD SELCER SUGGESTS TEXAS OUTLAW BIOS & FAVORITE WESTERNS



JOHN WESLEY HARDIN: DARK ANGEL OF TEXAS

(1996, by Leon Metz): Texas' most notorious gunman as profiled by the dean of Western historians. What could be better? While neither the first nor the last Hardin biography, it remains the best. Metz brings the complex, sociopathic Hardin (1853–95) to life. The subject reportedly killed as many as 40 men in gunfights—a tally, even in Texas, that justifies the enduring popular interest.

Bloody Bill Longley (2011, by Rick Miller): The very definition of an unreconstructed Rebel after the Civil War, Longley (1851–78) left a string of bodies strewn across the West, only regretting that John Wesley Hardin had more kills to his credit. Author Miller, a onetime police officer and lawyer, has made a second career out of writing well-received biographies of outlaws and lawmen. This may be his best.

Sam Bass (1936, by Wayne Gard): Bass was Texas' most infamous stagecoach and train robber, if not particularly successful at either. The boyish-looking outlaw (1851–78) became an improbable legend in his own time. Read this biography by venerable Dallas newspaperman and Texana writer Gard for the storytelling, not the scholarship.

Shotgun for Hire: The Story of "Deacon" Jim Miller (1970, by Glenn Shirley): Sadly out of print though available second-hand, this slim volume is the best biography of the man known variously as "Deacon Jim" and "Killin' Jim." James Brown Miller (1861–1909) was a paid professional assassin who lived for killing and had as many as a dozen successfully executed contracts to his credit. Shirley, the prolific author of more than 20 books on legendary frontier figures, keeps the scholarship front and center.

Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde (2009, by Jeff Guinn): They blazed a trail of romanticized murder and mayhem from Texas to Minnesota before going down in a hail

of bullets. Bonnie Parker (1910–34) and Clyde Barrow (1909–34) lived a life of crime together and died together. This is the definitive dual biography of the Depression-era criminal darlings by a respected journalist turned author who has won awards in both fields. Guinn puts his subjects in a broader historical context as media archetypes.

MOVIES

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969, on DVD, 20th Century Fox): This classic Western turns the namesake outlaws into charming heroes and personifies the buddy film. Directed by George Roy Hill, it is carried by the magic of William Goldman's script and its two gorgeous stars, Paul Newman and Robert Redford.

The Wild Bunch (1969, on DVD, Warner Bros.): Sam Peckinpah's masterpiece speaks to both the end of the West and honor among thieves. The aging title outlaws decide to go out in a blaze of glory, proving they do, after all, have a moral code. The ballet of bloodletting at film's end reinvented the Western shootout.

The Long Riders (1980, on DVD, United Artists): Director Walter Hill relates the James-Younger Gang's failed 1876 bank raid in Northfield, Minn., with the conceit of having real brothers



(Keaches, Carradines and Quaid) portray the James, Younger and Miller boys. Worth watching repeatedly just for the climax of the running gun battle through Northfield.

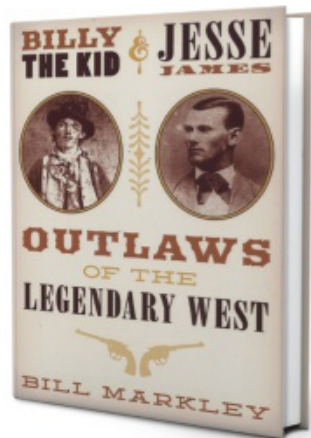
Bandolero! (1968, on DVD, 20th Century Fox): Not a classic but worth watching for the pairing of James Stewart and Dean Martin as brothers gone bad, pursued by a sheriff (George Kennedy) who is scarcely better. Spoiler alert: This workmanlike Andrew McLaglen vehicle ends with a long, bloody shootout in which almost everyone dies.

Jesse James (1939, on DVD, 20th Century Fox): Arguably the first Hollywood Western to glamorize the outlaw, it boasts a brilliant script by Nunnally Johnson delivered by an all-star cast including Tyrone Power, Henry Fonda, Randolph Scott and John Carradine. There's little connection to the real Jesse James, but who cares?

BOOK REVIEWS

Billy the Kid & Jesse James: Outlaws of the Legendary West, by Bill Markley, TwoDot, Helena, Mont., and Guilford, Conn., 2019, \$16.95
Plenty has been written about the two most notorious outlaws in

Wild West history, but Bill Markley's second book in the *Legendary West* series is a worthwhile read even for those who've delved into the many earlier biographies of Billy and Jesse—if only for an enjoyable refresher course. Markley's first offering was *Wyatt Earp and Bat Masterson: Lawmen of the Legendary West*. That was a natural pairing, as Earp and Masterson worked together, remained friends and said nice things about each other.



Pairing up the Kid and the better-known of the James brothers (Frank having long been overshadowed by younger brother Jesse) is different in that the two main subjects largely worked in different parts of the country and at most met once (near Las Vegas, New Mexico Territory, in late July 1879, an alleged meeting Markley addresses in a sidebar). What's more, Jesse was a dozen years older than Billy, Jesse first became involved in the killing business during the Civil War when Billy was just a kid

somewhere (little is certain about his early days), and Jesse was into robbing banks and trains, while the Kid was mostly a rustler. "Comparing the two outlaws' lives," Markley writes in his introduction, "is similar to comparing astronomical phenomena. Jesse's career was like a comet slowly traversing the night skies, while Billy's career was more like the streak of a brilliant shooting star plummeting to earth."

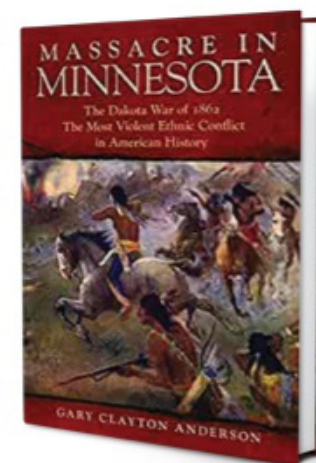
Regardless of the difficulties in comparing Billy to Jesse, it's interesting to see the lives and careers of the two men dealt with in one volume. The task of separating truth from legend for the pair might be easier than it was in the last century (thanks to legwork by assorted researchers), but it still rates as a challenge. Was Billy the Kid, though sometimes misguided, actually a pretty decent sort who waged a personal war against greedy businessmen backed by a corrupt territorial government? Was Jesse James, a die-hard supporter of the Confederacy, really fighting after the Civil War against greedy Yankee bankers and railroad men, and did he really take from the rich to give to the poor? Though Markley addresses such questions, he mostly just lays out the facts and allows readers to

decide. "I have tried to write this book with no bias, but everyone has one, even if it is subtle," he admits.

"I have reviewed the information on Jesse and Billy and tried to present those stories that have the ring of truth," Markley adds. Helping the author's cause are his reliance on six excellent books, which he recommends to readers seeking more details on aspects he only touches on here. His big six include, for Billy, *The West of Billy the Kid*, by Frederick Nolan; *Billy the Kid*, by Robert M. Utley; and *To Hell on a Fast Horse*, by Mark Lee Gardner; and for Jesse, *Frank and Jesse James*, by Ted P. Yeatman; *Jesse James*, by T.J. Stiles; and *Shot All to Hell*, by Gardner. Who was the greater of the two outlaws? Well, first off, one must figure out exactly what "greater" means in regard to lawbreakers. Certainly, Jesse's criminal career was longer and loaded with such dramatic robberies as the failed Northfield raid in Minnesota. But Billy had his share of dramatic moments, especially during the Lincoln County War, which rivals the Earp-Cowboy trouble in Arizona Territory for deadly factionalism. Both recorded great escapes—Billy after shooting Sheriff Pat Garrett's two deputies in Lincoln, Jesse after

the fiasco at Northfield. And both remain better known and better liked than the men who shot them—Garrett and Bob Ford, respectively. Everyone has an opinion of the "greater" question, and Markley gives his own answer, though he saves it for the afterword.

—Editor



Massacre in Minnesota: The Dakota War of 1862, the Most Violent Ethnic Conflict in American History, by Gary Clayton Anderson, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2019, \$32.95
Gary Clayton Anderson, the author of a dozen books about American Indians and U.S. history, shares a new perspective on events leading to the 1862 Dakota War (aka Sioux Uprising) in Minnesota. Researching and documenting the treaties of 1851 and 1858 between the Dakota Sioux and the federal government, the author concludes both pacts failed, and he places the blame primarily on the corrupt practices of the Bureau of Indian

Affairs. Only a fraction of the money Congress sent to the Indians ever reached them. Lack of money led to a lack of food, accompanied by famine and, finally, uprising and the war.

Anderson also refutes the longstanding belief Little Crow was the prime mover of the Dakotas' decision to attack the whites, his stance in fact being more moderate. "Rather than a symbol of butchery—there is no evidence that Little Crow ever killed anyone—he was the ultimate example of the tragic nature of the Minnesota-Dakota War," the author writes. Blamed for the uprising at the time, the chief suffered humiliation that did not end with his death. His killers became heroes and received a \$500 reward, while Little Crow's scalp, skull and forearms resided in the Minnesota Historical Society archives until repatriated to South Dakota for burial in 1971.

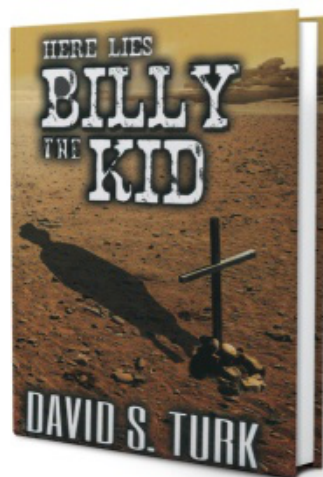
The author lavishes considerable attention on the dilemma President Abraham Lincoln faced regarding the fate of Dakota prisoners after soldiers finally crushed the uprising. Ultimately, instead of executing 303, as the Army wanted, the president ordered the execution of only 39, subsequently whittling it down to 38. Even

then, it represented the largest mass hanging in American history.

Anderson lets the Indians relate their perspective, drawing on three dozen Dakota and mixed-blood narratives published in *Through Dakota Eyes: Narrative Accounts of the Minnesota Indian War of 1862*, a collection he edited with Alan R. Woolworth more than 30 years ago.

Massacre in Minnesota provides a balanced understanding of how that state's experiment with coexistence between Indians and white settlers failed. Readers interested in the history of the Indian wars stand to learn more about the Sioux's bloodiest single conflict in this insightful book.

—Thomas Zacharis



Here Lies Billy the Kid, by David S. Turk, Cold West Publishing, Barto, Pa., 2019, \$28. Controversy and mystery shroud the life of Billy the Kid, from just where and when he was born to his role in New Mexico Territory's Lincoln County War (whether he deserved amnesty,

as others received, from Governor Lew Wallace), and from his 1881 death in Fort Sumner at the hands of Sheriff Pat Garrett to modern-day fights over the exhumation of his body (for DNA testing) and his prominent place in New Mexico history (including his value to the tourism industry, despite his outlaw status).

Author David Turk, historian of the U.S. Marshals Service, previously wrote *Blackwater Draw*, an examination of the murder of three of Billy the Kid's enemies in Lincoln County. In the introduction to *Here Lies Billy the Kid* Turk says right off the bat he thinks there have been "too many books about Billy the Kid," but then suggests his book about the battle between two New Mexico towns over Billy's body "adds to the genre" and is "perhaps one of the last original topics on Billy the Kid."

The Kid spent most of his short adult life in New Mexico Territory, primarily in and around the town of Lincoln in Lincoln County. But he also made his presence felt in Fort Sumner, where Garrett gunned him down and which later became the seat of De Baca County. The towns have had different ideas about

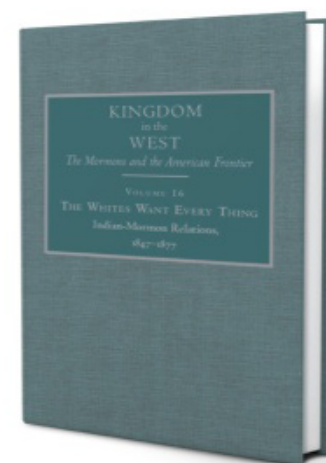
how to deal with Billy, particularly his remains. Fort Sumner jealously guarded his grave (the main reason visitors came to town), while many in Lincoln felt he should have been reinterred in their town, which in the 1950s sought to become a "Williamsburg of the West."

Lois Telfer, a red-headed beautician living in New York City, claimed she had an ancestor who was a twin to Billy's father, and when she sided with Lincoln in April 1961, it prompted the battle central to Turk's book. Local newspapers published missives from commissioners and others from both communities, and as battle lines were drawn, legal maneuvers began. "Over the following nine months," Turk writes, "attorneys battled in the courts and newspapers, bringing mocking comparisons to the Lincoln County War—when the Kid was alive."

As the author details, the fight over Billy's body was made more complicated by the remains of Kid compadres Charlie Bowdre and Tom O'Folliard, which are reportedly buried beneath the same Fort Sumner tombstone. The exhuming process, a judge concluded, might unnecessarily disturb the other remains.

Talk of digging up Billy resurfaced early in the 21st century, but that's another story. The 1961–62 story Turk relates is an interesting one, at least to the many folks who continue to have Billy the Kid very much on their minds.

—Editor



The Whites Want Every Thing: Indian-Mormon Relations, 1847–1877 (Vol. 16 of Kingdom in the West: The Mormons and the American Frontier), edited by Will Bagley, The Arthur H. Clark Co., Norman, Okla., 2019, \$55

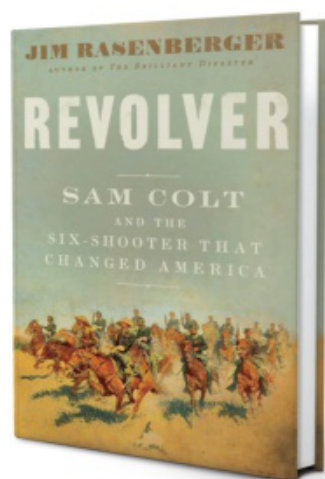
Simplified accounts of the American West in the mid-19th century tend to depict Mormon settlers as sympathetic allies of the Utes, Shoshones and other American Indians with whom they shared the Great Basin. Aside from the obvious fact that both Mormons and Indians faced a challenge when it came to dealing with other white settlers and the U.S. Army soldiers who backed them up, as early as 1828 Joseph Smith Jr. gave Indians a central role in his

Book of Mormon. He said they were descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, errant Jews he called “Lamanites” who were waiting to be restored “to the knowledge of Jesus Christ” (of Latter-Day Saints), thus fulfilling biblical prophecy. A closer look into the way history really unfolded reveals things were not that simple. Persecuted as they so often were, Mormons in the East had little time to go proselytizing among the tribes. Those who settled in and around what would become Utah tried to coexist with their neighbors, but that did not always go as hoped during the inevitable conflicts over arable land and water, which made up less than 4 percent of the territory. Indeed, some of the wars fought between the Mormon arrival in 1847 and the death of Brigham Young in 1877 pitted Mormons against Indians rather than the two in uneasy alliance against the bluecoats.

The Whites Want Every Thing is the final volume in a series of books about the Mormon frontier experience and, in the opinion of editor Will Bagley, “the most difficult of all the 16 volumes of the *Kingdom of the West* series to compile.” White officials of the era transcribed much

of the documented material of the Indian viewpoint, leaving open the question of whether they honestly reflect the thoughts of the speaker or the transcriber. Bagley, an award-winning author and diligent editor, is a self-professed Mormon and confesses the imbalance between his up-bringing against the American Indian experience. Nevertheless, he did his level best to gather all available firsthand material to allow participants from either side speak their piece regarding this troubled 30-year period in the Great Basin and, in so doing, has derived fresh answers to the question, *When the lion goes among the lambs, who is the lion, and who are the lambs?*

—Jon Guttman



Revolver: Sam Colt and the Six-shooter That Changed America, by Jim Rasenberger, Scribner, New York, 2020, \$28 America is a nation of inventors, and among them are a select few whose names stand in for the very creations

they wrought. Think Morse’s code, Ford’s sedan or Tupper’s ware. The world of firearms boasts more than its share of namesakes, including Gatling, Henry and Winchester. But one name stands out in the pantheon of great American inventors, with resonance right up to the present: Colt.

As the story goes, Samuel Colt conceived his revolutionary revolver mechanism in 1831 while returning stateside from a seafaring voyage his father had hoped would take some of the starch out of his 16-year-old rascal of a son, who was a bit too fond of pyrotechnics, much to the dismay of his schoolmasters. Five years later Sam secured a patent for his “revolving gun,” and in the years that followed Colt became to pistols what Winchester later became to rifles—the inseparable gold standard. Yet by his untimely death at age 47 in 1862 the inventor had sold scarcely more than 400,000 revolvers. The models most closely associated with his name—the 1873 Single Action Army (aka “Peacemaker”) and the M1911—rolled off the line at Colt’s Patent Fire Arms years after their namesake’s passing. And while tens of millions of Americans have since purchased Colt’s iconic

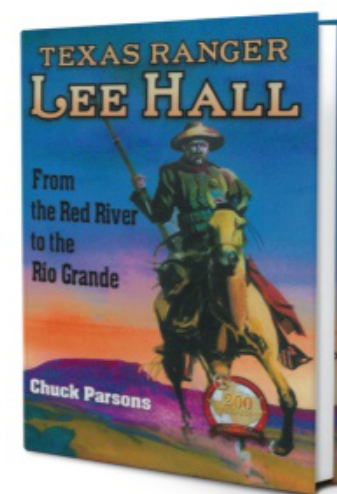
revolvers, the inventor himself has remained something of an enigmatic figure. Until now.

“Because he was a man with his own distasteful truths, and heirs willing to bury them, Colt left behind rabbit holes—ellipses, traps—for his future biographers,” writes Jim Rasenberger in the prologue to *Revolver*. “The problem has not been helped by a spate of Colt biographies that blend verifiable fact with outright fiction, making little attempt to distinguish which is which.” Rasenberger isn’t shy about exposing many of Colt’s “distasteful truths” (financial woes, womanizing, a rumored secret marriage, an illegitimate son, a brother who committed foul murder and then cheated the hangman by killing himself). But his biography is far more than a tell-all. Spanning the period of American history from the War of 1812 to the Civil War, the lively narrative traces Colt’s roller-coaster path from poverty to fortune to bankruptcy and back to fortune. “But it is also—trigger warning—the story of a gun,” quips Rasenberger.

Though the author claims “no agenda other than to tell what honestly happened to Sam Colt, his gun and America in the years

1814 to 1862” and insists “the past is the one place in American life where we can lower our weapons and consider our common heritage,” he can’t help but repeat a few revisionist tropes and stray, albeit briefly, into present-day politics. “It would be naive to believe that the story of Colt and his six-shooter will significantly change anyone’s opinion about guns,” Rasenberger concedes, “but it should at least remind us of how much we all owe to guns, and, for better and for worse, to one gun in particular.”

—Dave Lauterborn



Texas Ranger Lee Hall: From the Red River to the Rio Grande, by Chuck Parsons, University of North Texas Press, Denton, 2020, \$29.95 It took a set of rugged individuals to establish the Texas Rangers in Western legend, and in recent years historians have plucked out many such individuals for special attention. Jesse Lee Hall is not

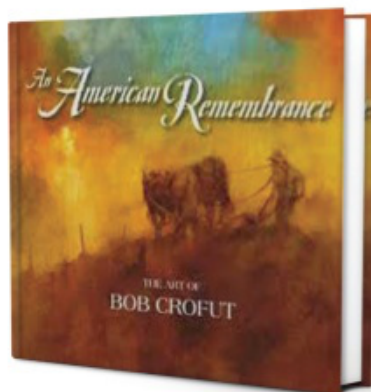
the first of those to have been meticulously researched and written up by author Chuck Lyons, but he might rate among the most adventurous, though he spent only four years (1876–80) as a Texas Ranger.

Those years were anything but dull. Succeeding the dying Captain Leander H. McNelly, Hall upheld the “Ranger ideal” McNelly espoused. Though he was not directly involved in any epic shoot-em-ups, the men he led brought in such hard cases as King Fisher, John Wesley Hardin, Sam Bass and seven key members of the Sutton faction, effectively ending the bloody Sutton-Taylor Feud.

Parsons reveals it was love and a lady’s ultimatum that prompted the Ranger to quit the force. However, Hall ultimately proved one of those restless characters who just couldn’t settle for a settled life with wife Bessie. His craving for adventure later led him to chase horse thieves, serve as an agent for the Comanches and Kiowas at Anadarko, Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), command soldiers of the 1st U.S. Infantry Regiment in the Philippines (after having failed to be accepted into Colonel Theodore Roosevelt’s Cuba-bound Rough

Riders) and guard gold shipments in Mexico with the Sultana Rangers.

—Jon Guttman



An American Remembrance: The Art of Bob Crofut, by Bob Crofut, P.O. Box 393, Ridgefield, CT 06877 [bobcrofut@gmail.com], 2019, \$40

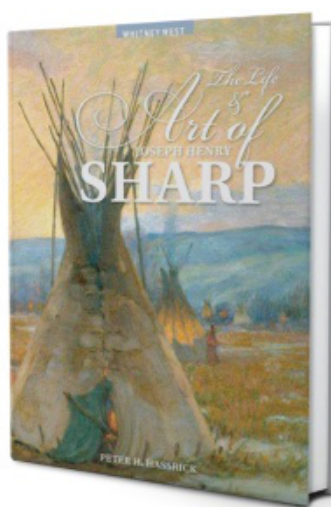
Bob Crofut is a man of few words (his book lacks even an introduction), but that’s OK, as his fine artwork, described as a “unique style of soft-focus realism,” more than fills every spread. The Connecticut resident, whose work has appeared in *Wild West*, described *An American Remembrance* thus to his hometown Ridgefield Press: “It’s a warm, sympathetic look at our American past and the emotional impact it has on me, which I express in paint and in words.”

Three of the paintings featured in the book—*Wakunta*, *The Return of Yellowknife* and *Savage Autumn*—depict lone American Indians in canoes. Other solitary Indians appear in *Twilight of the Lakota*, in which a Sioux warrior standing beside a bison skull holds aloft

a peace pipe, and *Savage Wind*, an allegorical look at the Apache warrior Geronimo accompanied by his quote, “Once I moved around like the wind.”

Though his scenes often reflect nostalgia and peaceful simplicity, his oil *Guns of Tombstone* provides more intensity, depicting Wyatt Earp in the act of drawing his six-shooter. Other works with Western themes include *Monty’s Drift* (two cowboys and a packhorse), *Up North* (a boy and his wolf dog—think Jack London’s *White Fang*), *Dust on the Tracks* (a train robbery), *Dusty’s Reel* (a saddle bronc in action) and *The Drifter*. While information about the paintings is sketchy, the work itself is fabulous.

—Editor



The Life and Art of Joseph Henry Sharp, edited by Peter H. Hassrick, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2019, \$25
Joseph Henry Sharp (1859–1953) was a founding member of the preeminent Taos

Society of Artists. His surname is apt, as “sharp” precisely describes his portraits of American Indians and Western landscapes. He first saw Taos, New Mexico Territory, in 1893 and moved there full-time in 1912. It was his second Western home. In 1905 he’d built a home at the Crow Agency in Montana after President Theodore Roosevelt commissioned him to paint the portraits of 200 Indians who survived the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

“Many of the half-length portraits, designed to emphasize the models’ physiognomy and dress, included on the canvases’ backing detailed biographical anecdotes about the sitters,” writes Marie Watkins, a professor emerita of art history at Furman University in Greenville, S.C. She is one of the contributing authors, along with Sarah E. Boehme, Kelin Michael, Karen B. McWhorter and Peter H. Hassrick. Hassrick, who died in 2019, also edited this attractive book. He was the director emeritus and senior scholar at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, Wyo.

Hassrick wrote the section entitled “The Studios of Joseph Henry Sharp.” Sharp’s first Taos studio, in 1909, was a Penitente

chapel, and his artistic focus centered largely on Taos subjects. But earlier he had embraced the great outdoors of Montana and Wyoming in all seasons. “The vast northwestern landscape became his studio when he was not focused on portraiture and domestic scenes,” Hassrick writes. “And in winter, when temperatures could freeze the paints on his palette, he was equally enthused with the outdoors. His Montana friend and patron Charles Bair outfitted him with a sheep wagon that was called the ‘Prairie Dog.’ This gave Sharp mobility and shelter as he explored reaches beyond the view afforded by his cozy studio window.”

Accompanying the text by the expert authors is a timeline of Sharp’s long life (he died at 94 in Pasadena, Calif.) and 129 color and black-and-white illustrations. “Fueled by wanderlust and a desire to leave a lasting legacy,” writes McWhorter in the introduction, “Sharp traveled the world, from Munich to Madrid to Montana, from San Francisco to Santa Fe and farther still.... Taos, New Mexico, and Crow Agency became the homes to which the itinerant artist would consistently return.”

—Editor

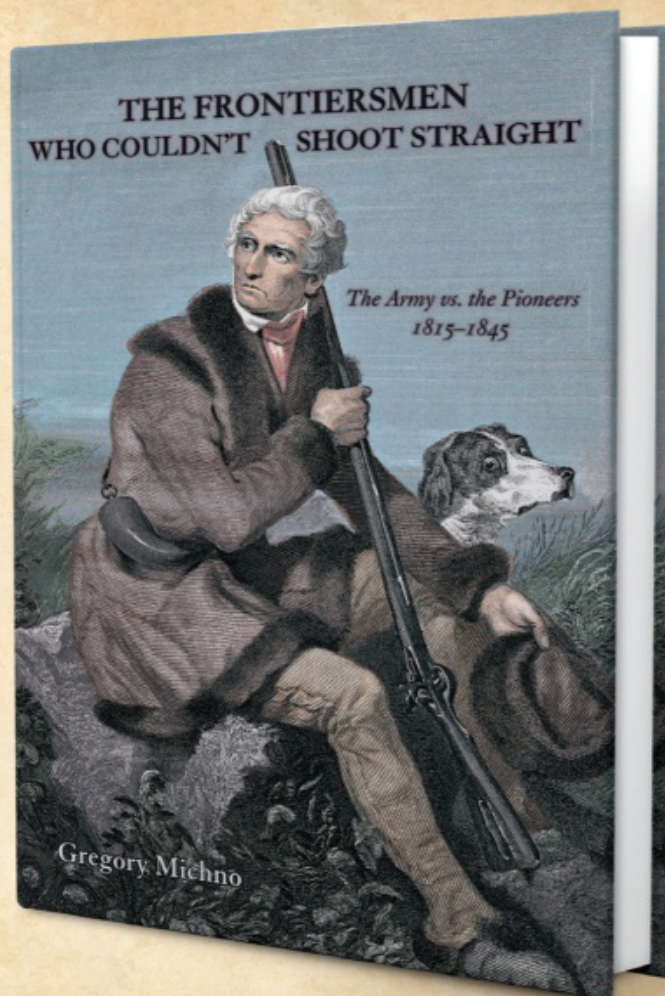
The Frontiersmen Who Couldn't Shoot Straight

The Army vs. the Pioneers 1815-1845

BY GREGORY MICHNO

GREGORY MICHNO herein offers powerful vignettes on citizen fraud and public wrongdoing through the decades of expansionism in the American West. It is at once a well-documented revelation on the fabled institutions that have invested common perceptions of our frontier past that every citizen should consider. Michno is an original thinker and one of our finest interpreters of western history, as this contribution well proves. — Jerome A. Greene, author of *January Moon: The Northern Cheyenne Breakout from Fort Robinson, 1878-1879*

GREGORY MICHNO ranks among the most original independent scholars at work today on Western history and the American experience in general. In this frequently disturbing book, he eviscerates the notion of American exceptionalism by deconstructing the myth of the frontiersman. The supposedly self-reliant pioneers who facilitated civilization's advance into the wilderness whined endlessly for government support and protection, and then turned on that helping hand whenever it attempted to curb their incessant efforts to defraud, dispossess, and slaughter their Indian neighbors. Michno pulls no punches in this scathing and well researched indictment, demonstrating that the worst aspects of contemporary culture have dealt in Americans' hearts since the birth of the republic. — Gregory J.W. Urwin, Temple University



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WHAT POKER HAND WAS WILD BILL HICKOK HOLDING WHEN SHOT DOWN IN A DEADWOOD SALOON?

Two pair (aces and eights),
four of a kind (spades),
a pair of aces, or three jacks?

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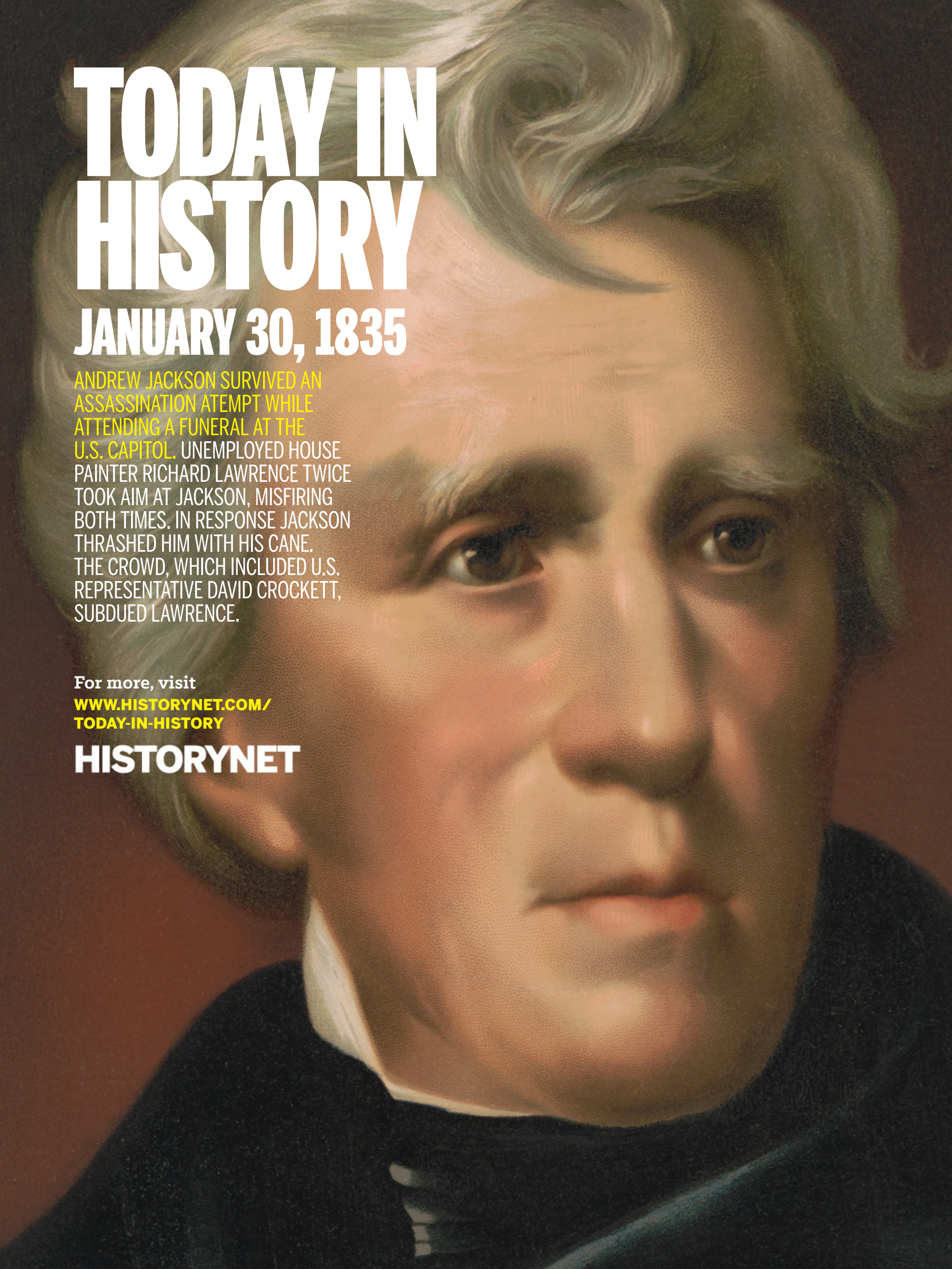
ANSWER: TWO PAIR (ACES AND EIGHTS). GUNNED DOWN WHILE PLAYING FIVE-CARD STUD IN A DEADWOOD SALOON BY JACK MCCALL, HICKOK WAS HOLDING BLACK ACES AND BLACK EIGHTS AS HIS "UP CARDS", THE IDENTITY OF THE FIFTH CARD, THE "HOLE CARD" IS THE SUBJECT OF DEBATE. THE HAND BECAME KNOWN AS "DEADMAN'S HAND".

MOUNT WHITNEY & THE ALABAMA HILLS, CALIFORNIA



In the foreground are the Alabama Hills, at the foot of the eastern Sierra Nevada in California's Owens Valley. The dramatic sagebrush- and boulder-strewn slopes have served as shooting locations for countless Western TV series and films starring such big names as John Wayne, Randolph Scott, Roy Rogers and Tim Holt (inset, in a still from *Rider in Tucson*). Forever stealing the scene

is Mount Whitney, the tallest peak in the Lower 48 states, which rises some 14,505 feet in the background. Film buffs can go in search of specific shooting sites or visit the Museum of Western Film History [museumofwesternfilmhistory.org] in nearby Lone Pine. Avid hikers eye the 22-mile round-trip hike to Whitney's summit. Most set aside two days, as the climb is 6,100 vertical feet from the Whitney Portal. For info visit the Forest Service [fs.usda.gov]. www

A close-up portrait of Andrew Jackson, showing his face and upper torso. He has light-colored, wavy hair and is wearing a dark coat with a white collar. The background is dark and out of focus.

TODAY IN HISTORY

JANUARY 30, 1835

ANDREW JACKSON SURVIVED AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT WHILE ATTENDING A FUNERAL AT THE U.S. CAPITOL. UNEMPLOYED HOUSE PAINTER RICHARD LAWRENCE TWICE TOOK AIM AT JACKSON, MISFIRING BOTH TIMES. IN RESPONSE JACKSON THRASHED HIM WITH HIS CANE. THE CROWD, WHICH INCLUDED U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DAVID CROCKETT, SUBDUED LAWRENCE.

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